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WILLIAM CARVOSSO.

Have faith in God.

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A

SAINTLY AND SUCCESSFUL WORKER:

OR,

SIXTY YEARS A CLASS-LEADER.

A Biographical Study.

INCLUDING

INCIDENTAL DISCUSSIONS OF THE THEORY AND EXPERIENCE OF PERFECT LOVE, OF THE CLASS AND CLASS-MEETING, AND OF THE ART OF WINNING SOULS,

SUGGESTED BY THE EXPERIENCE AND LABORS OF

WILLIAM CARVOSSO,

BY

DANIEL WISE, D. D.

"The great end of biography is to fix the attention and to interest the feelings of men on those qualities and actions which have made a particular life worthy of being recorded."—*Coleridge*.



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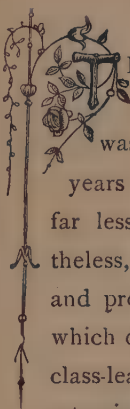
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PREFATORY NOTE.



THE memoir of William Carvosso, the model class-leader of earlier days, was familiarly known to our people thirty years since. The present generation have far less acquaintance with it. It is, nevertheless, one of the most precious, interesting, and profitable of the many biographies with which our Church literature is enriched. To class-leaders and to persons seeking the highest spiritual attainments possible to believers on earth, it has a special value. In this volume the *substance* of that memoir is retained, but is presented in a form entirely different from that of the original work. Its materials are here made the basis of a study of the man. The

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sources of his power with men, the growth of his natural endowments, and of his spiritual life are traced out. What he owed to nature and what to grace is ascertained. His manner of working in the class-meeting, in the prayer-room, and in more private spheres of action is amply illustrated. His religious experience is carefully analyzed and made the basis of remarks on such vital questions as the witness of the Spirit to the adoption of the sons of God; as the nature of perfect love; as the profession of entire sanctification; as fanatical extravagances in professors of high attainments, etc. The question of the class-meeting is also freely discussed, objections to it answered, and the class-meeting of the future outlined. Hence, it is a book for the spiritually minded, for class-leaders, and for Christian workers generally, for whose interest it is written, and to whose serious attention it is respectfully commended.

DANIEL WISE.

ENGLEWOOD, N. J., January, 1879.



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A

SAINTLY AND SUCCESSFUL WORKER.

Chapter I.

INTRODUCTORY.

SUCCESS is the test and measure of available ability. Latent powers which produce nothing are valueless alike to their possessor and to society. Of him who accomplishes unusual results it is always safe to affirm that he is a person of superior qualities, original or acquired, or both. It is true that temporary success is occasionally won through a fortunate combination of accidental circumstances which crown an undeserving brow with laurels that are earned by others. But no man in any department of human activity can be equal to his

opportunities and achieve results continuously through a long life, unless he be the possessor of sterling abilities—of mental and moral qualities, and tact to use them effectively.

In any vocation a successful man is a proper subject for profitable study. It is true that his genius may so individualize him as to make him inimitable; but in the application of his endowments to human affairs he is compelled to act on certain universal principles, the observance of which is necessary to the successful use of every degree of original ability. Hence one may learn much practical wisdom by carefully noting how the man of genius, whether statesman, soldier, jurist, merchant, minister, or lay Christian worker, made his powers available—by asking how much of his success must be attributed to his natural endowments, how much to his habits of self-culture, to his circumstances, his industry, his energy, his methods, his manners, his moral and religious qualities.

In this volume we propose to press such inquiries as these concerning a man whose sole special

claim upon the attention of the Christian Church arises out of his success as a *lay Christian worker*. He was neither a genius nor a scholar, as we shall presently see. He was only a humble lay toiler for souls and a Wesleyan class-leader. Yet such was his marvelous success in that modest vocation, maintained through the long period of sixty years, that during his life thousands of lips blessed him, and since his death his name has been a household word, as "ointment poured forth," among the hosts of our Christian Israel all over the world. By means of his modest "memoir" the voice of WILLIAM CARVOSSO, the godly lay worker, has gone forth to the ends of the earth, saying to all Christian laborers, to class-leaders especially:

"Jesus conquered when he fell,
Met and vanquished earth and hell;
Now he leads you on to swell
The triumphs of his cross.
Though all earth and hell appear,
Who will doubt, or who can fear?
God, our strength and shield, is near,
We can not lose our cause."

That a class-leader should win such fame is certainly a very remarkable fact. The fame itself is but a bubble, but its cause is sacred. Carvosso's name lives because he was an eminently successful soul winner and a leader of souls. Let it be our serious inquiry, What made him so successful in this grandest work of man? In what did his great strength lie? What was the secret of his success?



Chapter II.

WILLIAM CARVOSSO BEFORE HIS CONVERSION.



T will assist us in making our estimate of this remarkable man if we first ascertain what nature, early influences, and education did for him. Ancestry, family blood, hereditary qualities, no doubt often contribute much of good or ill to individual character. It is a good thing to be well, if not high, born. Nevertheless, greatly good men, such as John Bunyan, George Whitefield, and Bishop Asbury, have not unfrequently had their birth in very lowly cottage homes. It was so with William Carvosso. He was born in an obscure home, near the obscure village of Mousehole,* in the

*An odd name for a village, derived from a cavern in a neighboring cliff. It is delightfully situated on the shore of Mount's Bay. It had formerly been a place of considerable importance, but

obscure parish of St. Paul, Cornwall, England, on the 11th of March, 1750. His parents appear to have been poor, unknown, but respectable people. His father was a common sailor on board a coasting vessel when Carvosso was an infant—the last born of five children. From this vessel he was torn by a press-gang—that relic of a despotic age now happily passed away—and forced to serve on board a man-of-war. Whether he saw his family often or not after this is uncertain. When he did visit them, his stay must have been brief, for Carvosso says: “Of my father I knew but little. . . . He continued in the king’s service many years, and died in Greenwich Hospital,” unsolaced, of course, either by the sympathy of his wife or the presence of his children. One would like to know more concerning the father of such a son as our class-leader. But since Carvosso threw a veil over his life, we must be con-

was burned by Spanish raiders during or just before the reign of Queen Elizabeth; a misfortune from which it never fully recovered. It is about three miles south-west of Penzance and twelve miles from Land’s End. The surrounding country is noted for its fertility, fine scenery, and mild, though moist, climate.

tent to leave it there and proceed to study our subject without knowing for which elements of his character he was indebted to his roving and, we suspect, somewhat unfortunate father.

Nor do we know much more of his mother. We are sure she must have led a life of toil; for with five children to rear, and with no other regular income than her husband's scant half pay, which we assume the wanderer, according to general usage, left her, she must have struggled hard to keep the wolf of poverty from her door. In all probability she had to eke out a subsistence by some such woman's work as washing, ironing, mangling, or sewing. This, however, is only our surmise. Carvosso is very reticent respecting her. Yet we are sure, both from what he does and from what he does not say, that the poor woman's life was one of toil, drudgery, and anxiety. Once at least, during his childhood, William added to her ordinary troubles by falling into a river and narrowly escaping death by drowning.

Too poor to pay for the instruction of her children by the village schoolmistress, Mrs. Car-

vosso did not wholly neglect it, but herself "carefully taught them to read." This suggests a pretty family picture of the toil-worn mother, sitting, at the close of day, with love in her eyes, primer or spelling-book on her knee, and little William at her side, laboriously striving to put the keys, at least, of all knowledge into his awkward, perhaps reluctant, fingers. It was doing very little toward her child's education, but, like Mary of Bethany, "she did what she could."

We catch one other glimpse of this mother of a noble son in the following brief passage from his pen: "My mother," he says, "was a Churchwoman, and one, I trust, who feared God and found her way to heaven."

This guarded statement implies that during his childhood his mother's religious life was somewhat formal. We judge, therefore, that beyond taking him to church, teaching him the Church Catechism, setting him an example of morality, and giving him occasional simple lessons in behavior, this hard-working mother contributed very little to the formation of this poor boy's religious char-

acter. Formalism was at that period the prevailing sin of the Established Church and of its followers.

When only ten Summers old, young Carvosso left his paternal home. His bright, active nature appears to have attracted the attention of a respectable farmer of the neighborhood, who requested him to enter his service. "I cheerfully consented," he says; a confession which suggests that the penury of his home made the abundance of a farmer's kitchen appear desirable to his half-satisfied appetite, and that his mother's affection was more practical than demonstrative. Had his home been a soft nest of sweet tenderness, the boy of ten years would not have "cheerfully consented" to quit its shelter that he might enter upon the hard, cheerless toil usually imposed upon a farmer's boy in that olden time.

Of his treatment, tasks, and conduct in that farmer's home we have no details. One fact only is recorded. With admirable simplicity Carvosso says: "After a while my master became very earnest about having an indenture for me."

Evidently the man felt that the boy was a desirable prize—a good business investment. He had qualities which promised future profit. And just then the sailor father happening home on leave from his ship, an indenture was executed, and our future class-leader became the farmer's apprentice, legally bound to remain with his master until he should be eighteen years old.

Three years later the farmer died. It would then have been easy for the boy of thirteen to break the bond of his apprenticeship, but he naively remarks, "As I was treated with great kindness, I remained in the family eleven years;" that is, until he was twenty-one, or three years after the expiration of the time for which he had been bound.

This fact illustrates, not merely the kindness of his employers to which he so modestly refers, but also his own industry, trustworthiness, good nature, and skill. Had he been lazy, shiftless, unreliable, or unskillful at the plow, the flail, the milk-pail, or in handling a team, the owner of the farm would have been glad to get rid of him.

Had he been ill-natured he would have taken offense at something or other and left. Had he been fickle-minded, given to change, he would not have remained eleven years in his first place.

Nevertheless, he was by no means a model, either in his youth or early manhood. While faithful as apprentice and as hired man, he had great moral faults, which, though probably considered venial by his employers, were sins against God and immoralities of very dangerous tendencies. Let us listen to his confession of the sins of his youth. He says:

“During this time I was borne down by the prevailing sins of the age; such as cock-fighting, wrestling, card-playing, and Sabbath-breaking. . . . I lived without God, amidst innumerable sins and provocations, more than twenty years.”

This frank acknowledgment is suggestive. A cock-fighter necessarily hardens his sensibilities and trains himself to cruelty; a wrestler is on the highway to coarseness and brutality; a village card-player is invariably a frequenter of the ale-house tap-room; a habitual Sabbath-breaker is a

man self-tempted to forgetfulness of God. Each and all of these vices imply companionship with vulgar, rude, profane, intemperate associates. Surely, young Carvosso walked in slippery places while practicing these ethical misdemeanors—these offenses against benevolence, right, self-respect, and religion!

Still, we can not avoid a conviction that he was not as wicked as he seemed. Had he entered with all his heart into the spirit of those vices, we do not see how he could have been so true and useful to his employer as we have seen he was; for he would, in that case, have become corrupted both in principles and practice. Neither could he have continued, as he did, to be a regular attendant “at his parish Church.” We therefore prefer to think that he drifted into the current evil practices, not because his nature was viciously inclined, but because they were generally practiced by the young rustics with whom he was compelled to associate, or be companionless. Thoughtlessness, rather than conscious cruelty, led him to find pleasure in the combats of birds

armed with steel spurs. In his admiration of their spirit and pluck he lost sight of their sufferings. In like manner, he wrestled because he was proud of his strength, but did not know that he was brutalizing himself by the feat of strength which cast his adversary to the ground. Neither was he aware of the self-corrupting tendency of card-playing, nor of the inclination toward the dread gateway to hell of the path he was treading in the company of his rude associates. Doubtless much of his sinning was done in ignorance. Nevertheless, he was touching pitch, and it defiled him; and in many things, even with his dim religious light, he must have known that he was, in the language of his prayer-book, "doing many things which he ought to have left undone, and leaving undone many things which he ought to have done." Still, viewing his early life in connection with the paucity of his opportunities, we think that after his conversion he might have said with Paul, of the sin of his early life, "I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."

We have now reached the end of his career of sin. He is on the eve of the great event which was to lift him from his obscurity, ignorance, and vulgarity, and make him a happy, intelligent, distinguished, useful man. Place him in the scale as he now stands before us! What have we? A naturally bright but illiterate farm laborer; skillful, industrious, steady in his humble avocation; a faithful servant; a good-natured rustic, floating down the stream of customary but intrinsically evil amusements, and displaying no mental qualities which could suggest to his most sanguine friends the possibility of his ever rising above the position of a first-class farm laborer, or, at best, of a successful small farmer. Evidently, if William Carvosso is to become a man eminent for usefulness and known to fame, some power above himself or his human friends must bring out the hidden qualities of his soul. Happily for himself and the Christian Church, that superhuman power touched and transformed him just when his feet crossed the threshold of manhood.



Chapter III.

CARVOSSO'S CONVERSION.

CARVOSSO is now about twenty-one years of age. On a Sabbath morning in the Spring of 1771, we see him, clad in his best suit, entering his mother's little cottage with no higher purpose than to accompany her to the parish church. On opening the door, an unwonted spectacle meets his eyes. His only sister is on her knees praying most tenderly, and with the unction of a convert's "first love," for her mother and brothers. He is astonished beyond measure. His sister lived at Gwinear, twelve miles distant. He had heard nothing of her conversion, nor that she had come all the way from Gwinear to tell the joyous news and to warn her mother and brothers to flee from the wrath to come. Her prayer, born

of such loving zeal, thrilled his hitherto thoughtless soul. He listens as one who is wonder struck. Presently his sister rises from her knees, unabashed at being found in prayer by her brother. Her eyes are suffused with tears of tenderness. She looks earnestly into his face, and, in tones tremulous with tenderness, inquires:

“My dear William, what preparation are you making for eternity?”

The young man indisposed to ridicule, but unable to reply, stands silent and confused before his earnest sister, who next asks:

“Do you attend the preaching of the Methodists?”

“No, I do not,” replied her still wondering brother.

“Then I do wish you would go to-night, and be sure you hear for yourself,” is her beseeching rejoinder.

What else passed between that wondering brother and that earnest sister on that eventful morning we are not told. We do know, however, that the sister's words and spirit so touched

young William's mind that as the evening drew near, a strong desire to hear the "Methodist preacher" caused him to attend the service. The preacher was Thomas Hanson. Carvosso on entering the little hall fixed his eyes steadfastly on him. His mind was already aroused, and when the text "We are ambassadors for Christ," etc., was announced, it was to his heart an arrow tipped with fire. As the sermon proceeded, Carvosso writes, "The word quietly reached my heart, the scales fell off from my eyes, and I saw and felt I was in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. I had such a sight of the damning nature of sin and what I had done against God, that I was afraid the earth would open and swallow me up."

Whence came the sudden flash of light which revealed this ignorant rustic to himself and made him tremble as one who sees himself on the brink of hell? Surely it could not have flashed solely from the preacher's words. Nay, it was a manifestation from the Divine Spirit, convincing the hitherto thoughtless young man that he was a

sinner, deserving eternal death. He might have combated, resisted, fought down this conviction. He did a wiser, nobler thing. He accepted it as his guiding star by breathing this solemn promise to his offended Maker:

“If thou wilt spare me, O Lord, I will serve thee to the end of my days.”

This was no idle promise, no half-way pledge. It was followed by a mental purpose to give up all his sins and all his old companions “at a stroke,” and to join any one he could find who was bent, as he now was, on “going to heaven, cost what it would.”

This new-born purpose was put to a severe test that very night. “I had a hard struggle with Satan about praying before I went to bed,” he writes. “He appeared as if he was by me, and labored to terrify me with his presence and the cross of duty.”

The fierceness of this struggle implies that he had a room-mate. To pray openly before him was to make a revelation of his new-born purpose. It was a test of his sincerity, his earnest-

ness, his courage. The Lord helped him, he tells us, by applying the text, "Let your light so shine before men," etc. He seized it as if it had been a falchion, taken from the armory of heaven. "Satan instantly fled," he exclaims triumphantly, "and I fell upon my knees."

This was a victory like the capture of an outpost on the eve of a decisive battle. It strengthened his purpose, but did not bring him the mental peace for which he groaned. On the contrary, it led to deeper convictions, fiercer struggles, and more terrible temptations. Possibly the tempter saw in him the germs of a character that would make him a successful warrior against his kingdom, and therefore employed the utmost of his hellish skill to keep him from the act of saving faith. In this mighty conflict, which lasted several days, the young man had no human helper, no clear knowledge of the way of faith. He was as one adrift in a dark, tempest-tossed sea, without a pilot to steer or compass to direct. Nevertheless, his strong will held him firmly to his pursuit of mercy.

At length the day of his deliverance arrived. It opened not with auguries of hope, but with agonies of despair. Let us hear his simple story of his final penitential struggles and of the birth of his faith. He writes:

“About the space of eight hours before I received the pardon of sin, I might say with David, ‘the pains of hell gat hold upon me,’ and the adversary of my soul harassed me with this temptation, ‘the day of grace is past, it is now too late.’ . . . I remember that in the midst of the conflict I said in answer to the powerful suggestions of the devil, ‘I am determined, whether I am saved or lost, that while I have breath I will never cease crying for mercy.’ The very moment I formed this resolution in my heart, Christ appeared within, and God pardoned all my sins and set my soul at liberty. The Spirit itself now bore witness with my spirit that I was a child of God. This was about nine o’clock at night, May 7, 1771; and never shall I forget that happy hour.”

This experience was like that of John Bunyan,

at least in its realistic conceptions of Satan's presence, its depth of feeling, and the violence of its temptations. Had Carvosso wielded a pen like that of the illustrious tinker, his record of those "many days" of darkness would have made the resemblance still more striking. Of its genuineness, however, there can be no doubt. His whole nature, intellectual, moral, and emotional, was shaken to its lowest deep; his perception of the damning demerit of sin was clear and piercing; his sense of guilt was overwhelming; his penitence was sincere; his purpose to forsake all evil was as firm as his strong will could make it; his faith was the tenacious grip of a soul strained to its utmost tension by its consciousness of danger, and his reception of the gift of pardon was as conscious as that of Bunyan's pilgrim, whose burden dropped from his shoulders while he stood gazing at the cross. A clearer, more satisfactory conversion can scarcely be imagined. It resembled a sudden transition from the gloom of a stormy midnight into the mid-day brightness of a Summer's sun. No wonder

he wrote: "Never shall I forget that happy hour."

Such an entrance into the spiritual kingdom is not vouchsafed to every believer. Different types of character and degrees of religious knowledge imply varied types of experience. Strong, robust natures, only partially enlightened, usually find the gateway to life through mist, storm, and struggles; and their sense of relief, when they find themselves in the embrace of Christ, is proportionably tumultuous; but when mild and gentle souls, familiar with holy truth from infancy, are truly awakened, they yield without much conflict, and are so sure of the scope of the promise of mercy that they can not despair; the characteristic of their experience is, therefore, necessarily a quiet, gentle, but decisive yielding, like that of Lydia, "Whose heart the Lord opened," as he does the rose-bud in June by the silent operation of nature.

Carvosso's penitence and conversion were in harmony with his mental constitution, his scant intelligence, and natural rude strength of char-

acter. His "many days" of conflict tended to prepare him, though he did not even surmise it then, for his subsequent work of guiding souls to Jesus. His fiery battles with the tempter made him acquainted with Satan's devices and fitted him to show multitudes of tempted penitents how spiritual victories must be won.

Like all other new-born souls, Carvosso soon found that, though foiled, his tempter had not forsaken the field. Satan now approached him, not as a defiant adversary, but as an "angel of light," whispering to his simple heart the plausible suggestion, "You must not declare what you have experienced; if you do, you will fall into condemnation."

"Then I will take care not to mention it," replied he, instantly falling into the snare.

This purpose he conscientiously kept for two days, albeit his brother Benedict, who was living under the same roof with himself, was under distressing conviction of sin, and might have been greatly comforted by being told what God had done for William.

His silence did not disturb his new-born peace, because it was not the offspring of shame or cowardice, but was intended to be an act of obedience. Happily for himself and others, he soon learned that he was under a delusion. After two days, while walking with some godly people from a meeting in Mousehole, he heard them talking on the question of knowing one's sins forgiven. Then the impulses of his renewed heart prompted him to burst the bond of temptation, and to tell what he had experienced. The gush of happy emotion which accompanied his confession swept away the delusion, and he saw that his light was intended to be held forth and to shine, not to be put "under a bushel."

Renewed minds gravitate toward Christ as their center of attraction. Influenced by the same spiritual force, they, like magnetized atoms, are also drawn toward each other. Being under the inspiration of a common affection, they necessarily desire communion as kindred spirits mutually qualified to unite in the sacred rites of a fellowship in which the strong assist the weak,

and all are blest through the testimony of each. He who feels no desire for the "fellowship of saints" has good ground for suspecting the genuineness of his religious emotions.

Feeling the need of such fellowship, young Carvosso, with characteristic promptness and singleness of purpose, joined a small Wesleyan class which was in Mousehole. He was thus introduced to an institution from which he derived great spiritual benefit, and in which he was destined to work with eminent success through the long period of threescore years.



Chapter IV.

DEVELOPMENT OF CARVOSSO'S RELIGIOUS CHARACTER.

CARVOSSO was not yet prepared to teach others. He had, in fact, almost every thing to learn himself. Of theology he knew next to nothing; and with respect to general knowledge, his mind was an unfurnished room. His religious experience, though genuine, was neither broad nor deep. Assuredly, to outward appearance, there was as yet nothing to suggest to his most sanguine friends, that this obscure rustic would or could win world-wide renown as a soul winner in the Church of God.

Dr. George MacDonald, in his "Seaboard Parish," makes the following remark: "How nature laughs at our schools sometimes! Education, so called, is a fine thing, and might be a

better thing; but there is an education—that of life—which, when seconded by a pure will to learn, leaves the schools behind, even as the horse of the desert would leave behind the slow pomposity of the common-fed goose. For life is God's school, and they that will listen to the Master there will learn at God's speed."

It was in "God's school" that young Carvosso studied with real earnestness. He served God with all the might of his robust Saxon nature. He drew instruction from things without him every-where, as the magnet draws the filings of steel to itself; but, like Bunyan, he sought for knowledge chiefly in the Word of God. "From my first setting out in the way to heaven," he writes, "I determined to be a Bible Christian; and though I had not much time for reading many books, yet I blessed God I had his own Word, the Bible, and could look into it. This gave me a very clear map of the way to heaven."

With this fact before him, one can not feel surprised to learn that this unlearned Christian neophyte retained his "happy frame of mind,"

undisturbed by doubts or fears, "for the space of three months." He fed on the Word, and it became a daily strengthening manna to his soul; he listened to its sublime teachings as to words spoken by the Highest One, and grew rapidly in spiritual wisdom. What it commanded he cheerfully did, and, as a consequence, the Comforter shone upon his soul in light unclouded. Being a docile learner, the Spirit soon led him into the green pastures of what good John Bunyan poetically styles the "Land of Beulah."

The benefit of his constant and realistic study of Holy Writ is beautifully illustrated by its effects during an attack of fever which prostrated him about this time. Very naturally, while he lay burning and restless, perhaps scarcely conscious, he suddenly discovered that his "joys and comforts had fled. I could trust in God," he says, "though I could not rejoice; but this passage of Scripture was applied to my mind, 'He that believeth on Him shall not be confounded.' I received it as from the Lord, and my peace and joy returned again. But being only a babe in

Christ, and not knowing how to live or walk by faith, my joys soon withered again. While examining myself, these words came with such power to my soul, and made such a deep impression on my mind, that I never forgot them: 'Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.' 'These words were applied to my soul with such light, life, and power, that I seemed to be lifted from the bed on which I lay.'

This fever-stricken babe in Christ, with his self-scrutiny, his resolution not to be satisfied with less than the joys of faith, his simple trust in the divine Word as spoken to himself, and his rapture when the Holy Spirit made the promises radiant with his own light, commands both our admiration and our sympathy. Many Christians, better instructed and more largely experienced, would have been satisfied on a sick bed with a conscious, though joyless, trust. But this illiterate rustic, just admitted into the kingdom, will be content with nothing less than the fullest possible comfort that faith can impart. To obtain it he hugs the promises to his heart, as mothers often do their be-

loved babes, until he forces from them an exultation so thrilling that he seems "lifted from the bed." So lasting is the effect of his warm embrace of those two sweet texts that, half a century later, he says of them: "I may venture to say that a thousand and a thousand times have I thought on these two precious promises. They have not only been a staff in each hand to lean on during these fifty intervening years, but they have been as two strong pillars on which to rest my weary soul in Satan's darkest hour."

One can readily pardon the rhetoric of this last sentence for the sake of the rich lesson contained in the incident to which it gives point, and which was characteristic of the man who, from first to last, never would rest with less than the richest fruits which grow on the tree of faith.

Carvosso's entrance upon what is sometimes—perhaps unfitly—called the "higher Christian life" is worthy of study, because he was led into it, not by human teachers, but by the illumination of the Holy Spirit shining upon his mind and on the Word of God. He distinctly affirms that he

had “never conversed with any one who enjoyed purity of heart, nor read any of Mr. Wesley’s works.” How, then, was his attention called to the subject?

After the expiration of his three months of almost undisturbed spiritual delight, he seems to have felt, as nearly all regenerated souls do sooner or later, a stirring of his former selfish affections.* He had supposed them to be dead; he now found that, though subdued and held in check by the chain of his affection for Christ, they were, nevertheless, still sufficiently alive to struggle for their former ascendancy. We quote his own statement of the case:

“My heart appeared to me as a small garden

* We say *nearly*, not every regenerated soul has this experience, because, as Mr. Wesley remarks, “some who are newly justified do [bear the fruits of the Spirit]. If they really do, I will say they are sanctified—saved from all sin in that moment; and that they never need lose what God has given, or feel sin any more. But certainly this is an exceptional case. It is otherwise with the generality of those who are justified.” No doubt this is so. Nevertheless if, when men first embrace salvation, their conviction for inbred as well as outward sin was sufficiently deep, and their faith comprehensive enough to include inward purity as well as pardon, they might be both justified and wholly sanctified at the same time. But instances of such an experience are very rare.

with a large stump of a tree in it, which had been recently cut down level with the ground and a little loose earth strewed over it. Seeing something shooting up I did not like, on attempting to pluck it up I discovered the deadly remains of the carnal mind, and what a work must be done before I could be 'meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.' My inward nature appeared so black and sinful, that I felt it impossible to rest in that state."

To the rhetoric of this passage we object that it does not convey a true and exact idea of the Scripture theory of regeneration, which is, that it consists chiefly in the introduction of a new life—the divine "leaven"—into the soul. This is called being "born again," "born of the Spirit," a "new birth," because it is the process by which, as Paul describes it, "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." Hence John also says, "Every one that *loveth* is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God." Do not these texts teach that the love of God is

the vivifying element—the life principle—in regeneration?

This Scriptural view of regeneration as the process by which a new affection, the love of God, is supernaturally introduced into a human heart is not, can not be fitly illustrated, but only confused by Carvosso's rhetorical tree and its sprouting stump. As a matter of fact, nothing is *cut down* in conversion, but all wrong affections are *repressed* by the introduction of a new, heaven-born love. This is usually so vigorous, so full, so overpowering at first, that as with Carvosso, many, perhaps most, young converts imagine that their old sinful affections are actually dead.

Carvosso discovered his mistake when emotions which he incorrectly described as shoots from "the stump of a tree," began to disturb his peace. These "shoots," which he more properly designates "the deadly remains of the carnal mind," were his old sinful, selfish affections reasserting themselves and rising from their temporary stupor to contend with the divine affection which now claimed lordship over them. Their

unexpected activity troubled him exceedingly, and he wrote: "It is impossible for me to describe what I suffered from an evil heart of unbelief."

This struggle which was to decide the, to him, mighty question, whether he would grow into saintship or fall again under the dominion of selfishness, continued through eight months. It involved much distress of mind, much agonizing prayer, many stern conflicts with Satan; but did not destroy his loving confidence in God. On this point he writes very decidedly: "Some persons," he says, "will imagine that this may have arisen from the want of the knowledge of forgiveness. . . . I never had one doubt of my acceptance; the witness was so clear that Satan himself knew it was in vain to attack me from that quarter. I ever kept in remembrance,

‘The blessed hour, when from above
I first received the pledge of love.’”

This statement is important. It harmonizes with Scripture, which declares "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." It proves that this good man did not believe that

had he died while this struggle was going on, he would have failed of heaven, although his old "carnal mind" still had vitality sufficient to strive for victory. Many indiscreet persons teach otherwise, and often distress conscientious souls who do not feel at liberty to profess "perfect love." "If," say they, "it be true that without holiness no man can see the Lord, how can persons dying without that blessing go to heaven?" Assuredly they can not. But we believe that in the Scriptures every truly regenerated soul is held to be holy. Paul addressed the imperfect Hebrew converts as "holy brethren," and St. John said: "He that is born of God sinneth not." Carvosso's experience of an abiding sense of divine acceptance is in harmony with Paul's and John's teaching. It is surely worse than folly, yea, it is unpardonable mockery, to affirm that the Holy Comforter bears witness to the sonship of a radically unholy man, who, if he were to die, would drop into hell! Carvosso neither believed nor taught such absurdity. His experience showed him better things.

But, it may be asked by an anxious mind, are not these strivings of old affections evidences of an unholy nature? We reply by asking, Is not the victory of the new affection over the old ones evidence of a *holy* nature? Is it not proof that the divine order—and holiness is *order*—which requires man's natural affections to be subject to the law of supreme love to God is at least partially re-established?

There is, indeed, a seeming but no real mystery in the processes of divine grace and the experiences of believers. We need to keep in mind the great fact that the Gospel is a remedial system, seeking "to save that which is lost." Consequently God, who is the just One, deals with fallen human nature *as it is*, not as if it were unfallen and innately pure. In regenerating men, therefore, he implants his love as the restorative principle—as the *leaven* which is to assimilate the soul to itself—that is, he so impresses the human consciousness with a sense of his personal love, that it begets a reciprocal affection which, if duly cultured, will gradually subdue all things

in the soul to itself. The will, long accustomed to be a law to itself; the passions and appetites, long used to unlawful indulgences; the affections, heretofore but little restrained, will all naturally struggle against the dominion of this intruding love for the Divine One. But *so long as the man is loyal to the latter*, the striving of the old selfish affections, though sinful in nature and tendency, is not imputed to him as sin. Their selfish activity after regeneration is the natural and, so far as we know, necessary consequence of their former subjugation to the carnal principle. But God having pardoned the offenses growing out of that evil servitude, does not permit its involuntary effects to separate the regenerated soul from himself. *Loyalty to the law of love*, feeble and wavering though it be at times, is accepted as the fulfillment of the law. Hence, in spite of the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, as John taught and Carvosso experienced, "He that is born of God sinneth not." Not that he is actually sinless, but only without that voluntary sin which entails *guilt*. It is of such sin that John

speaks when he says of the regenerated soul, "His seed remaineth in him, and he can not sin, because he is born of God." The meaning of which is, that it is not in the nature of things that a soul holding on to its faith in the Word—the "seed" from which its love to God sprung—should deliberately and consciously offend the object of its heaven-born affection. It is the nature of all love to please, not to grieve, the being to which it clings.

Mr. Wesley puts this question strongly in his sermon on the "Repentance of Believers," when he says of regenerate souls: "They still deserve, strictly speaking, the damnation of hell. But what they deserve does not come upon them because they have an advocate with the Father. His life and death and intercession still interpose between them and condemnation."

We must, however, emphasize the above qualification, lest we be charged with being an apologist for sin. We say, *so long as the man is loyal* to his new affection, the attempt of his old selfishness to reassert itself is not imputed to him as

sin. But if his loyalty fail, he falls. The moment he ceases to side with his new affection, and *consciously* surrenders to the demands of the old selfish affections, his conscience takes on the stain of guilt. Hence it follows that, with every genuine Christian, as with Carvosso, the activity of wrong affections operates as a stimulus to strenuous endeavor to make the reign of divine love absolute and all embracing. If it does not, he speedily sinks into formalism, or abandons his profession.

Carvosso, closely following the Word of God, saw this. He was deeply convinced, he says, that "without holiness there could be no heaven." That is, it appeared clear to his simple mind that he must either obey the impulses of his spiritual life and "go on to perfection," or resist them, backslide, and perish. He also saw from such Scriptures as Ezekiel xxxvi, 25-27: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean," etc.,* that the victory of Christ's love

* This text, though frequently used as a *promise of entire sanctification* by earnest believers, if read in connection with its contexts will be seen to refer not to the spiritual cleansing of a Christian believer, but to the purging of the Jewish people from their

might be made complete, and that, too, in a brief period of time.

“Seeing this,” he writes, “it was my constant cry to God that he would cleanse my heart from all sin.” He became increasingly earnest, “greatly distressed from a want of the blessing.” One night after a meeting, he says, “I turned into a lonely barn. . . . While kneeling on the threshing floor, agonizing for the great salvation, this promise was applied to my mind, ‘Thou art all fair, my love: there is no spot in thee.’”

We question whether this scrap from the Can-

idoltrous inclinations and practices. It is both a promise and a prophecy which found fulfillment in the historic fact that after their return from the Babylonian captivity the Jews never relapsed into their former idolatry. Those who think there is a double meaning in most of the prophetic writings may see in these words a promise to Christians of that heart purity which is wrought in faithful souls by the mighty working of the “Spirit of adoption.” And He who knows the desires of the heart, and who wills to “Save his people from their sins,” may honor faith in a promise which, though given to his ancient people with reference to their peculiar national sin, expresses in the conception of the seeker the purity offered to our Lord’s disciples in other portions of the Divine Word. Nevertheless, the intelligent believer will not presume on the condescension of his Lord by such misuse of Holy Scripture. He will prefer to rest his faith on promises which are clearly his own, and which obviously cover the blessing he seeks.

ticles was *divinely* applied to his mind; first, because we do not think God speaks to the soul in such sensuous terms; and again, because it did not afford him any relief, only led to much self-accusation during the two following weeks. Then the victory of faith was won. He shall tell us in what way:

“One evening, while engaged in prayer-meeting, . . . I began to exercise faith by believing, ‘I shall have the blessing now.’ Just at that moment a heavenly influence filled the room; and no sooner had I uttered or spoken the words from my heart than refining fire went through my heart, illuminated my soul, scattered its life through every part, and sanctified the whole. I then received the full witness of the Spirit that the blood of Jesus had cleansed me from all sin. I cried out, ‘This is what I wanted, I have now got a new heart.’ I was emptied of self and sin, and filled with God; I felt I was nothing, and Christ was all in all. . . .

“‘Amazing love! how can it be

That thou, my Lord, shouldst die for me.’

Oh, what boundless, boundless happiness there is in Christ, and all for such a poor sinner as I am."

Such was the glorious victory won by the simple, partially instructed faith of this determined young man. It brought him a richer, sweeter baptism of the Holy Spirit than he had previously experienced. The effect of this spiritual baptism was: (1.) A sudden intensification of the love first "shed abroad in his heart" in his regeneration, into an all-absorbing affection. (2.) Such a rectification of his natural desires, passions, appetites, and affections, as set them free, not from liability to excessive and misdirected action, but from their former strong tendency to unregulated, selfish action, and subjected them to the divine affection, now not merely dominant, but *triumphant* in his soul. (3.) The complete subjugation of his will to the will of his Lord. (4.) A closer intimacy, a more assured peace, a sweeter communion with God through the Holy Spirit, by whose light, *shining upon his consciousness*, not by any *direct* testimony except to his adoption, as we shall hereafter show, he knew

that the blood of Christ had cleansed him from all sin, properly so called; that is, as Wesley cautiously puts it, from all "*voluntary transgression of a known law.*"

Precious indeed was this delightful experience, this beautiful unfolding of the divine life begotten in him only ten months before when he was "born of the Spirit." It brought him *nothing new in kind or quality*, but only in *degree*. The "leaven" of holy love had now assimilated all things within him to itself. Hence he says: "I was emptied of self and sin, and filled with God." The love of Christ reigned over all other affections, and this made him "pure in heart."

May every believer attain this perfection of love? Undoubtedly he may, for God is no respecter of persons, and "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to *cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" We are not sure—for Scripture does not settle the question—that the complete triumph of divine love can be won by all through precisely such a *marked and instantaneous* experience as it was in Carvosso's case. All

are not constituted alike, and differing idiosyncrasies imply varied experiences. His nature was determined, emotional, intellectually free from casuistical tendencies, and eminently trustful, and his experience harmonized with these characteristics. A disciple of less enthusiastic temperament, of less emotional susceptibility, of keener ethical and intellectual perceptions, and of less confiding habits of mind, would be likely to reach the same result by more gradual processes, because to him faith would be more difficult and love slower to respond to the divine manifestation. Consequently the completion of love's victory over his selfish affections might be so gradual that the precise moment of its achievement might be unattended by an exceptionally tumultuous or distinctively marked experience. This much, however, is certain: every believer who is as truly in earnest as Carvosso may and will attain to a state, by one mode or another, in which the love of Christ will reign supremely over his whole nature. Our Lord made this blessed fact sure when he so sweetly said, "If a man love me he

will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." And what is this *abiding* consciousness of the divine presence but the evidence that we have that "perfect love which casteth out fear?"

To put the reader in possession of Mr. Wesley's views we will quote his answer to the question, Is this work of sanctification instantaneous or gradual or both? His reply, in his "Plain Account of Christian Perfection," is, "A man may be dying for some time, yet he does not, properly speaking, die till the instant the soul is separated from the body; and in that instant he lives the life of eternity. In like manner he may be dying to sin for some time, yet he is not dead to sin till sin is separated from his soul; and in that instant he lives the full life of love." To the question, "Do not believers gradually die to sin and grow in grace till at, or a little before death, God perfects them in love," he responds: "I believe this is the case with most, but not all. God usually gives a considerable time for men to

receive light, to grow in grace, to do and suffer his will, before they are either justified or sanctified. But he does not invariably adhere to this. Sometimes he cuts short his work. He does the work of many years in a few weeks—perhaps in a week, a day, an hour. It need not be affirmed over and over, and proved by forty texts of Scripture, that most men are perfected in love at last; that there is a gradual work of God in the soul, or, that generally speaking, it is a long time, even many years, before sin is destroyed. All this we know. But we know likewise that God may, with man's good leave, cut short the work in whatever degree he pleases, and do the usual work of many years in a moment. One may affirm it is gradual, and another that it is instantaneous, without any manner of contradiction."



Chapter V.

CARVOSSO SEEKING A MODERATE COMPETENCY.

CARVOSSO was now twenty-two years old, and an agricultural laborer. Of the two years following his spiritual baptism we know nothing, but may infer that his close walk with God was continued from the fact that, when twenty-four, he was appointed leader of a class. Nothing but an unspotted reputation for spirituality could have led a minister to place such a trust in the hands of an illiterate farm laborer.

Five years later he says: "I was convinced it was my duty to alter my condition in life by exchanging the state of a single for that of a married man." Years after, when death had broken the marital bond, he wrote of it: "In this matter

I ever believed I was divinely directed, for God gave me a wife who proved a helpmeet for me all the days of her life. In matters temporal and spiritual I always found her a blessing to me."

Evidently Carvosso's exalted piety was promoted, not injured, by his marriage. Neither the claims of affection, the cares incident to a domestic life entered upon in poverty and conditioned on unremitting toil, the trials inseparable from the rearing of children, nor the anxieties of business, were able to separate him from that love of Christ which took full possession of his soul in the memorable hour of his divine baptism. The secret of his fidelity was the fact that he regarded marriage, its duties, pleasures, and responsibilities as acts to be undertaken in the fear of God and to be regulated by the divine Word and by the superior claims of his spiritual life. He recognized the absolute lordship of Jesus in all things. Glad submission to his beloved Lord in every act, great or small, was, indeed, the pivotal idea which governed him and formed his character.

Shortly after his marriage he ceased working

as a hired man and became the tenant of a small farm near Mousehole. To eke out a living he added, during part of the year, the labor of "fishing for pilchards"* to the toil of the farm. Disliking the sea, he besought God to open his way to complete support on land. The divine answer to his prayer came slowly, but it came at length in an unsolicited, unexpected offer of a farm at St. Gluvias, near Ponsanooth, twenty-six miles distant from Mousehole. In 1788, when he was thirty-eight years old and the father of two children, he took possession of this new home. As he had "little capital," he says, "we had many unpleasant things to encounter; but the Lord was with us and brought us through all."

Human judges failed to discover any evidence of divine direction in his introduction to this farm, which, having suffered from neglect and poor culture, bore greater resemblance to a desert than to

* Pilchards are smaller than herrings, and not as good for food. Once a year vast shoals swarm along the coasts of Cornwall, and are caught in great seines and in immense quantities. When salted they are mostly sent to Southern Europe for consumption during the Lenten season.

a spot of fertile ground. "He will soon starve," was the general verdict of the neighboring farmers. But they underestimated either the quality of the soil or the capabilities of the unpretending Carvosso, or both; for instead of starving he not only earned a plentiful support for his household, but in the space of twenty-seven years acquired a "moderate competence." In doing this he, by his industry and good agricultural judgment, transformed this desert spot into fertile and attractive fields.

In achieving this remarkable success, his labors, especially at first, were herculean. He toiled early and late, ate from a frugal table, and bore up with heroic courage the burden of many weighty cares. Perhaps his weightiest load was a debt he was obliged to incur in order to procure necessary stock. To many this would have been little more than an inconvenience; to him it was a sore trial. To owe no man any thing was to his mind almost a duty. Hence we find him saying, with admirable child-like simplicity, "While I followed my cattle to the watering my

heart was earnestly engaged with God praying for his blessing on my temporal affairs and telling him how happy and grateful I should be if he would condescend to give me my little stock free from debt."

This confiding simplicity was characteristic of the man. He told every thing to God. He expected every good thing as a gift from the hand of God. He was not, however, a fanatic, looking for miracles, but a sensible, sober man, who knew that Heaven's special temporal blessings are distributed as the rewards of unceasing industry. Hence, while he served God with all his heart, he toiled with all his physical might upon his farm, and, says his son, "when occasion required, he would, with stinging, stirring words, move on those about him." Thoroughly in earnest himself, he would not permit his servants to treat their duties as trifles.

His avowed object during these years of toil was to secure "a moderate competency." His motive is not known. It was probably a desire to escape a condition of dependence should he live to be old and feeble. That this ambition

was laudable no sensible Christian will deny, since, in order to be supremely good, it is not necessary to be extremely poor, or to refuse the advantages which accompany the possession of property. Nevertheless, the pursuit of even moderate wealth is attended with danger. Temptations to impatience with the slow processes of Providence, to resort to illegitimate, not to say dishonest, means, and to make it the chief, instead of a subordinate object of life, always insinuate themselves, like demons in angelic garbs, into the thoughts of the man engaged in it. No doubt Carvosso was thus assailed, but he was not overcome. Speculators offered him plausible opportunities to "make haste to be rich" by investing the first fruits of his industry in some of the promising mines which abounded in Cornwall; but he abhorred speculation as deeply as he did dishonesty, and was deaf to the voices of all such charmers. The pressure of farm work, especially during harvest, often made it seem expedient, if not proper, to omit ordinary attendance at the sanctuary; but the Lord's spiritual work stood

higher in his affections than any temporal profit; and though he lived a mile from his place of worship, he was always found in it from five to seven times a week, albeit it often cost him severe effort at rapid work during the day to be at his beloved place of meeting at night. And by thus resolutely giving his religious aspirations and duties the first and highest place, he was kept from desires for more than a "moderate competency."

In this laborious and successful pursuit, Carvosso was "building better than he knew." Unconsciously he was purchasing the nineteen years of opportunity to give himself wholly to that Christian work which was the crowning glory of his long life, which made his old age beautiful and honorable, and but for which his name would have been written in water.

Perhaps no single fact is more illustrative of Carvosso's strength of character than his acquisition of the art of writing. When he was sixty-five years old he was unable to do any more with his pen than to mark his class-book and with difficulty to sign his name. One wonders how

such a man could have lived so long without acquiring an art so useful to a man of business. Our wonder increases when we are told that at sixty-five, feeling an irrepressible desire to express his thoughts to one of his absent sons, he took a pen into his horny hand, and with fingers stiffened by years of toil, taught himself to write. Paternal love inspired his attempts, and he was soon able to write with singular distinctness. And then, moved by a still nobler love, he began a religious correspondence with his spiritual children, which was rich in counsel, and which, had it been all collected, would have filled many volumes.

In 1813, when he was sixty-three years old, his good, true wife, after eighteen months of severe suffering from cancer, died a triumphant death. It was a sad bereavement, but he bore it with a genuine Christian submission, which expressed itself in the following touching language:

“I was enabled to offer her up to the Lord as his own gift, in the full assurance of faith that we should soon meet in heaven. . . . I intend

that my body shall be put in the same grave when I die, that we may sleep together till the great day when we, . . . and I trust all our dear children with us, shall fly up and be forever with the Lord."

The death of his beloved wife, the marriage of his only daughter and one of his two sons, with the entrance of the other upon the duties of a Wesleyan traveling minister, now made his life on the farm quite lonely. Moreover, the times were dull; farming had become less profitable than usual; and he was the possessor of that "*moderate competency*" for which he had toiled so long. "I had no desire for riches," he writes; "I spread my case before the Lord and earnestly sought direction from above. He saw my motive was to please him, and he condescended to direct me. One evening while sitting alone considering whether I ought to give up my farm and free myself from the cares of the world, these words came with power to my mind: 'Behold I have set before thee an open door.' I immediately considered it the voice of the Lord, and my

heart replied: 'I will go at once out of the world and retire from all its cares.' From this moment I saw my way clear. I was entirely freed from the world, and resolved to give up my few remaining days wholly to the service and glory of God."

This simple, child-like trust in divine guidance compels our admiration. Yet we are not prepared to commend its *method* for the imitation of our readers. It is possible that the fragment of Scripture which came to Carvosso's mind with such force was suggested and made impressive by the Holy Spirit. It is equally possible, and more probable, that it flashed into his memory through a law of association. He acted upon it, because it harmonized with his judgment and his inclination, both of which may have been influenced by the mysterious working of the Holy Spirit, the manner of which is an undiscoverable secret. "Thou canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth." It is always safe to trust in God's guidance, but the habit of accepting texts of Scripture *without regard to their true*

meaning, and intent, as the voice of the Almighty, is not always safe. It tends to fanaticism. But Carvosso's sound common-sense kept him from falling into that dangerous slough.

Carvosso's is now sixty-five years old. He has given up the St. Gluvias farm after twenty-seven years of abundant but profitable toil. His "moderate competency," whatever it was, is safely invested, and he has become a retired farmer, boarding with his daughter at a village called Dowstall, about three miles from Ponsanooth. He is a man of leisure, but his life being consecrated to the work of God, he is looking forward, not to days of idleness and self-indulgence, but to years of Christian endeavor in such fields as might be thrown open to his labors. His especial sphere of action was to be the class and prayer-meeting. As we shall see, he lived nineteen years after his retirement from business, and during those years he made his name so illustrious in the Church of God, that his fame as a successful class-leader and lay Christian worker has gone forth to the ends of the earth.

We have purposely abstained thus far from more than the bare mention of his appointment as class-leader, thinking it best to get first as much insight into his general character and business life as his biography permits, and then to study him in the field of religious work, especially in the sphere of his noblest spiritual triumphs, the class-meeting. Before entering on this part of his career, let us briefly estimate his qualities of mind, so far as they stand developed by his business life.

Evidently Carvosso can not be regarded as a great man. In no sense was he an intellectual man. Of literature in general he knew nothing. There is not a particle of evidence that he had any literary aspirations or tastes. This, of course, was a result of his almost utter lack of education. Yet, having learned to read, he might, busy and toilsome as was his life until he was sixty-five, have acquired some general knowledge if his desire for it had been fairly awakened. But seeing that he exhibited no such tastes, we conclude that his literary capacity was not of a very high order,

and we question whether, if he had been favored with better early opportunities, he would have ever distinguished himself as a scholar.

Yet the reader must not infer from these remarks that Carvosso was a man of naturally inferior mind. His career and his diary prove the contrary. He was indeed a strong man, but his strength lay in his understanding rather than in his reasoning and reflective faculties. He had good perceptive powers, sound practical judgment, and an uncommon measure of will force. His persistence was remarkable. His industry was unceasing, and was the outgrowth of an abounding vitality, which bubbled into unresting activity. He was also very sanguine and hopeful. All these qualities are necessary to account for his success on his "desert" farm at St. Gluvias. His long stay with his first employer and his happy domestic life prove that he was a man of deep, clinging affection, and we think also of great tenderness. On the whole, he must be regarded as a strong-willed, self-reliant, hard-working, sturdy yeoman, whose chief endowments

were sound, practical common sense and an "intensity of physical life" which made action a necessity of his being and gave strength to his grip of every interest, material or spiritual, which he undertook to prosecute. Hence, as we have already seen, he trod the way of religious life with a step as firm as that with which he followed his plow, and his face was as firmly set in the direction of heaven as it was in the pursuit of that "moderate competency" which was his highest earthly aim. Whatsoever his hand found to do he did it with his might. The result was success both in temporal and spiritual things. The former made him a man of leisure at sixty-five; the latter prepared him to be a singularly useful class-leader and a remarkably skillful soul-winner.



Chapter VI.

CARVOSSO'S FIRST ATTEMPTS AT CHRISTIAN WORK.

WE must now retrace our steps and go back to the period of Carvosso's life which first found him in the especial sphere of his usefulness. As previously stated, he was made a class-leader three years after his conversion; but though sufficiently acceptable to be continued in office up to the time of leaving Mousehole, he did not display more than an average fitness for its duties. When he removed to the St. Gluvias farm, in 1788, he found himself in a neighborhood which he describes as being spiritually "a dry and barren wilderness." There was no chapel. The preaching place was a room in a farm-house. There was only a little, feeble, destitute class, without a leader, and with

no member who "could even assist in holding a prayer-meeting."

But like a true Methodist, instead of seeking to make his Church relation tributary to his rising social status by joining a popular Church, as too many do in these degenerate days, he united with this despised band. Its weakness, instead of repelling him, commended it to his affections, and he wrote, "When I beheld these few poor sheep in the wilderness without a shepherd, I began to discover the reason why God had brought me twenty-six miles and fixed me in this place."

These words express the simplicity of a man whose eye, being single, sees his path lighted by the brightness of heaven. They also imply that Carvosso had a dim vision of coming usefulness. But his hour was not yet come. He was appointed leader of the "little class," but he naively writes, "I went on for some years without seeing much good done."

The precise number of these years of barren labor at St. Gluvias is not stated. Judging from the circumstances mentioned in his narrative, we

think it must have been at least twelve or fourteen. If this opinion is correct, then Carvosso must have been a class-leader *at least a quarter of a century* before achieving any thing more than mere acceptability. Doubtless his members respected and loved him, but they discovered none of those higher qualities which in later years made him eminent.

What is the philosophy of this late development of Carvosso's latent powers? It certainly was not any lack of deep spirituality on his part, for we have his assurance that the "perfect love" which filled his heart one year after his conversion remained in his possession. It was his soul's most precious jewel, which he guarded with jealous care, and which so adorned his life with Christian virtues that men respected his character and could cast no dirt upon his reputation.

Why, then, was his work so long unfruitful? We venture to suggest that possibly his mind was too unfurnished, owing to his utter lack of education, to give his words that weight and variety which come alone from intellectual quickening

and much thoughtfulness. The baptism of the Spirit, the fruit of which our Church calls "perfect love," works no miraculous results in the intellect, adds nothing to one's store of ideas, facts, and principles. Hence Carvosso's utter illiteracy must have been for a long time a source of mental weakness, of barren utterances, of inability to give much effectual guidance even to souls as ignorant as himself. Moreover, the stern demands of his farms, first at Mousehole and then at St. Gluvias, left him little time for mental improvement, even if his tastes had inclined him to seek it, which we do not think they did. Happily, however, his mind was active, observing, and receptive. He constantly drank in impressions from surrounding objects. Above all was his devotion to the Bible. It was the one book in which he delighted. He studied it that he might find spiritual nourishment and keep alive the flame of perfect love. What he sought he found, and more also. The divine book quickened his intellect. Its grand truths caused him to think; its sublime imagery enriched his

imagination; its pure Saxon style enlarged his vocabulary. In a word, it educated him, drawing out his powers and constantly adding to his mental strength and furniture. He appears to have read a few other books, such as Wesley's works, the Hymn-book, and the biographies of our early Wesleyan saints; but the Bible was the one book he constantly studied, and which, as the years fled, gradually prepared him to be the spiritual guide of thousands.

Our next suggestion grows out of his statement of the interesting incident which led him to discover his own strength as a soul-winner. He had been at St. Gluvias, as we suppose, some fourteen years, when two laboring men came to his farm seeking employment. He gave them lodgings at his house, little dreaming that he was "entertaining angels unawares." But such they proved to be, in that they, being truly pious men, proposed to assist him in holding a public prayer-meeting. He cheerfully consented. The result upon himself he describes in these significant words: "I saw it my duty, though the Lord had

given me but one talent, to attempt in prayer meetings to give a word of exhortation. I saw sinners perishing without repentance, and the Lord seemed to say to me, 'Their blood will I require at thine hands.' With fear and trembling I opened my mouth to beseech them to flee from the wrath to come. And soon after, to our great joy, it pleased the Lord to convince and convert a few souls and add them to our little number."

Alluding, when on his death-bed long years after, to this experience which was destined to influence many lives, he said, "I have considered that God also once gave me a particular commission to feed his sheep; and I have felt it to be my delight to minister to them and help the feeble of the flock." This was not a call to preach, but to work according to his ability. He called it a "particular commission," but where is the Christian believer who has not received, if not as emphatic yet as real a summons, to work in the Master's vineyard?

It is worthy of notice that Carvosso's special usefulness as a class-leader dates from this birth

of his subsequent life-passion for soul-saving. It is also a curious fact, that though he had enjoyed and professed "perfect love" some twenty years, yet he had not, till now, been inspired with a conscious passion for soul-winning. Looking only at the term, one would say that *perfect* love ought to beget this active love of one's species at once, and that he who is its possessor ought to be borne by its earliest impulses into the nearest sphere of labor for human salvation. Carvosso's case, if not typical, proves that "perfect love" may be enjoyed, at least for a longer or shorter time, without begetting such passionate love for souls. Alas for the imperfection of human language! The phrase stands truly enough for a very delightful and exalted affection, but not for a love that is absolutely perfect in the sense that it has reached its maximum of growth and power. It is, in this respect, like the love of bride and bridegroom, which, though perfect in that it fills their hearts, is far less stable, less powerful in its effects on their characters, than when it is matured by time and growth. In the case of Car-

vosso, his love was as perfect as his knowledge of God and human duty permitted at that period of his life. But as time sped his light increased, his comprehension of heavenly truth broadened, his conceptions of his personal obligations widened, and his heavenly affection, keeping pace with his ever enlarging perception, became a greater, grander, profounder thing than when it first filled his partially expanded soul. Thus, though "perfect" in one sense, he was in another and still higher sense, constantly "going on to perfection." And in this phase of his experience, is he not a type of all holy men and women?

On this theory one can harmonize the late birth of his passion for souls with his unquestionably honest profession and real enjoyment of "perfect love." But this late-born passion wrought wonders in his life. It certainly transformed him from a merely acceptable into an eminently successful class-leader and Christian worker.

Among the first fruits of this sacred passion were his three children. Returning, one evening,

with a friend from a love-feast, his companion said to him, with deep emotion,

“I had the unspeakable happiness, last night, of witnessing the conversion of my little daughter while I held her in my arms.”

“Why, I have two children,” replied the startled Carvosso, “who are getting up to mature age, and I am grieved to say that I have not yet seen any marks of a work of God upon their minds.”

His friend, speaking with a solemn emphasis that thrilled through Carvosso with more than electric force, rejoined,

“Brother, has not God promised to pour his Spirit upon thy seed, and his blessing upon thine offspring?”

This inquiry was a coal of fire in Carvosso's conscience, which instantly charged him with having failed to do his duty to his children. It enlightened him so that he perceived wherein his “perfect love” had been imperfect, but only through lack of light. He fell into an agony of prayer. He had always prayed for his children,

but never as now, with agonizing earnestness for an immediate answer, and with the grip of faith upon a promise. Every day he retired for the purpose of pressing this father's petition, but saying nothing to his children. He was trusting solely to the power of believing prayer. After two weeks, a messenger summoned him from the field one day to his house. As he crossed its threshold his wife said :

“Grace is above stairs distressed for something; but nothing can be got from her only that she must see father.”

Hastening up-stairs, he was profoundly moved to find his daughter weeping, and to hear her exclaim, with very deep feeling,

“Oh, father, I'm afraid I shall go to hell!”

“No, no,” replied he joyously; “glory be to God! I am not afraid of that *now*.”

She then told him that for two weeks she had felt the load of sin, thus proving that as soon as this man of faith had begun to pray in earnest the Holy Spirit had begun the work of conviction in the daughter's heart. And now, guided by his

loving instruction and borne up to the throne on the strong wing of his potent prayer, the dear girl speedily found peace in believing, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Shortly after Miss Grace's conversion his elder son, who had hitherto been "utterly careless about the things of God," and the associate of idle youths, came to him and said, very seriously,

"Father, I should like to go with you to class to-day."

Of course the glad father took his penitent son to class, when he soon had the pleasure of seeing him joined both to Christ and to his Church.

Carvosso was now a zealous worker for souls, and his class-room soon became a spiritual battle-field, to which serious persons were constantly led, and in which they were taught to win the victory of faith. In a short time one class was insufficient to accommodate the numbers who flocked to it. A second was formed, which Carvosso, for lack of a suitable substitute, was himself compelled to lead. The people also began to crowd the preaching room, until it became too strait for their

accommodation. It became necessary to build a "little chapel." The classes were made up of poor people. Carvosso, though now a thriving farmer, was not yet rich. Nevertheless, he boldly determined to build a house for his Master. A lot of land was secured, and, says our energetic class-leader, "to build the chapel was a great work for us; but by labor, giving what we could, and begging of those whom the Lord inclined to help us, we at length saw the blessed work accomplished. And now that I beheld the desire of my heart given me, oh how did I rejoice and exult in the God of my salvation!"

Carvosso was the leading spirit in both the temporal and spiritual parts of this movement, aided, of course, by the stated but brief visits of the circuit preacher. His class was the nucleus around which the work had grown and from which the inspiration spread. His mind guided every thing; his energy beat down obstacles which but for him would have prevented the erection of the chapel, and his liberality stimulated the charity which paid the cost of its construction. "He was

neither backward to contribute nor bore an unreasonable part of the burden himself," says his biographer, "but urged every one to do his part." He was a judicious giver. Had he been a narrow-minded, niggardly man, professing "perfect love" which did not transform his purse into a treasury of the Lord, he would not have been a model class-leader, nor have been able to write, as he did subsequently to the opening of the chapel, "the work of the Lord prospered more and more in the society." Even wicked men respect a spirituality which finds pleasure in self-denying liberality; but they regard, not unjustly, the high professions of a covetous man as the rant of fanaticism or the babbling of hypocrisy.

While witnessing the constant increase of his family of spiritual children, Carvosso became deeply concerned for the soul of his younger son. The lad was studious, fond of books, a lovely young moralist, and greatly beloved by his father, who says: "I knew his heart was estranged from God." Resolved, if possible, to lead him to Christ, Carvosso retired daily to the

same spot which had witnessed his prayers for his two other children. There, in the spirit of the patriarch Jacob, he wrestled often with mighty faith until one day, he writes, "these words were applied with power to my mind: 'There shall not a hoof be left behind.' I could pray no more; my prayer was lost in praises—in shouts of joy and glory, glory, glory! the Lord will save all my family."

After this triumph of faith and hope he waited, expecting, as in the cases of his daughter and elder son, to see him broken down by strong convictions. In this he was disappointed, however. But becoming "deeply impressed" that it was his duty to "talk closely with him about eternal things," he chose a favorable opportunity, and told him, with tears, of his desire to see him saved. He dwelt with tender emotion on the distress it would cause him to die before seeing him converted. This paternal appeal to filial affection melted the youth. He consented to go to his father's favorite spiritual battle-ground, the class-meeting, and there he soon found "remission of his sins."

Toward the close of Carvosso's residence at St. Gluvias a mighty wave of revival power swept from the adjacent town of Redruth over Cornwall. The society at Ponsanooth was greatly refreshed by it, so that "when Carvosso retired from his farm" the poor little class of which he had become the leader twenty-five years before, had grown into "a society of two hundred members, divided into eleven classes," three of which were under his personal care, and one under his younger son, who had by this time become a local preacher and was about to enter the traveling ministry. Seeing how much of this increase must be attributed to Carvosso, one can not help exclaiming, "What a glorious record for a class-leader for whom outward circumstances had done so little and religion so much!"



Chapter VII.

CARVOSSO DEVOTES HIMSELF TO CHRISTIAN WORK.

BEING relieved of business cares, and having ample means to supply his few simple material wants, if Carvosso, now an old man of sixty-five, had settled down in quiet ease, who would have found it in his heart to blame him? But he had no such thought. Indeed, such was the fullness and intensity of his physical life that inaction was positively distasteful to him. Idleness would have been torture to his energetic nature. Besides this irrepressible physical life there was a mighty tide of spiritual impulses pressing him to religious action. His love for the souls of men had become a passion too strong for repression. Thomas Arnold once expressed his own earnest zeal against certain

errors by saying, with more force than elegance, "I must write a pamphlet or I will burst." Carvosso might have said, with equal truthfulness and propriety, "I must save souls or I will die." He certainly would have lost much of his abounding spiritual life if he had not entered heartily upon the work of soul-saving which he now felt to be his vocation.

Nevertheless, his calling was not to preach. For that great work he had no ability, natural or acquired, and his sound common sense enabled him to recognize this fact and restrained him from desiring even a local preacher's license. But he was eminently qualified to exhort and to lead a prayer-meeting, where a remarkable power of utterance was often given him, and "not a few will bless God eternally that he ever opened his mouth at a prayer-meeting." Still higher were his qualifications to teach experimental godliness in the class-meeting. "Few men," says his biographer, "however great might be their attainments in theology and divinity, could excel or even equal him here. Within the sphere of the

class-meeting he was a wise master-builder." There he was, indeed, "a teacher of the first order in the science of saving souls." Tributary to his power in the class was his rare ability and skill in private personal efforts to persuade men to seek the Lord. By combining such labor with his class-meeting work he made himself so effective as to justify one who knew him well in saying, "For usefulness, perhaps Cornwall has not produced his fellow; especially in helping the sincere seeker into Gospel liberty."

Such was the man when the ties of business were sundered by his "moderate competency." How was he to find a suitable field in which to exercise his humble, yet peculiar, abilities? He had no plan beyond a purpose to do good as he might find opportunity.

More than this he did not require. To such a workman there could be no lack of opportunities. His local reputation as a class-leader soon secured him invitations to visit the classes from numerous Churches in all parts of Cornwall, and even from the adjacent county of Devonshire. His habit of

personal effort with individual sinners made even the public highway a sphere in which he could do effective work for his Lord.

The modern class-leader who longs to find the secret of success in his work must carefully note, as we proceed, the connection of private personal effort with class-leading in Carvosso's practice. Before the birth of that passion for souls, previously mentioned, which led him to personal effort for their conversion, he was only an acceptable leader, barely preserving the members of his class from backsliding. But from the time he united the two duties he became a mighty man in Israel. Let us see how he did both, and how the one bore on the effectiveness of the other.

Shortly after his retirement to Dowstall he started on horseback to visit his younger son, then a stationed preacher. On stopping to pay toll at a turnpike gate he says, "A female about eighteen or nineteen years of age came out to take toll. . . . The moment I saw her I felt such a concern for her salvation that I thought I could have died for her if that would bring her

to the Lord and be the means of saving her soul. But as soon as I had given her the toll she instantly retired and I had no opportunity of speaking to her."

This, to an ordinary Christian, would have been regarded as a sufficient excuse for allowing the case of a mere stranger, as she was, to pass out of his mind as beyond his reach. Carvosso's soul love was not so easily quenched. He rode on a short distance, then stopped his horse, and prayed for divine guidance. "It was impressed on my mind," he writes, "that I should see her again when I returned; so I proceeded on my journey."

It was eleven days before he again approached that toll-gate; but the gate-keeper's daughter had been continually before his mind and the subject of his prayers. When she appeared he withheld the toll, and asked her, very seriously,

"Can you be happy in this lonely place?"

Her reply showed him that she was an unawakened sinner. He began speaking earnestly on the importance of her eternal interests. She

listened uneasily, until seeing her mother come out, "she slipped from me," he says, "and went in. I felt sorry, as I had not said all I intended. I immediately alighted, went in after her, and found the Lord had touched her heart, for she was bitterly weeping. At this sight I soon wept also."

Her father who, unknown to Carvosso, was a pious class-leader, now requested him to pray with his weeping child. "The Lord poured out his spirit upon us, and my soul seemed overwhelmed with the divine presence," writes our class-leader. He then urged the girl to promise that she would go to class that night. She wept freely but hesitated, when Carvosso, with very deep feeling, said:

"I can not let you go unless you will promise me that you will go to-night with your father."

After a brief pause the subdued girl replied firmly, "I will go."

He then addressed her sister, who was already much affected by the touching scene before her, and, after a little persuasion, obtained a promise that she, too, would go to class.

Four months later Carvosso appeared once more at that toll-gate. When the girl came out he partially concealed his face by leaning forward on the neck of his horse. But she knew him instantly, and exclaimed joyously:

“You were sent here to save my soul.”

“It was the Lord who did it,” replied Carvosso, “and you must give the glory to him.”

His voice arrested the attention of the sister, and she “ran out with heaven sparkling in her eyes, and shouting aloud the praises of the Most High.”

Those happy sisters then insisted that he should go in. He dismounted, went in, and learned that both sisters had kept their promise, gone to class-meeting, and found peace; “and now,” added their glad father, “there is no need to urge them to go to class-meeting, for they are anxious to go at every opportunity.”

Eighteen months later one of these sisters died “in sure and certain hope of eternal glory.” Visiting the house shortly after her death, Carvosso said words to her brother Robert, which though

ineffectual with him, led a younger brother who was present to seek God. Three years later this young man died rejoicing in Jesus. Another visit and another appeal from Carvosso then led Robert to make the great decision. He lived in the faith five years, and then joyfully followed his brother and sister to the "Beautiful Land."

These interesting facts exhibit Carvosso's spirit, his method of approaching individuals, and his habit of connecting his private efforts with the class. His method, as the reader has seen, was so simple that its success can only be explained by associating it with his spirit. When he tells us that he *could have died for the gate-keeper's daughter* if by that means he could save her soul, we can readily understand why his plain words burned their way into her conscience and heart. His sincere passion for soul saving was the secret of his power over individual minds. His reason for exacting promises to attend class was his faith in the class-meeting "as a spiritual fold into which every soul who had a desire to flee from the wrath to come and to be saved from sin should

be at once conducted. He knew that within the boundary of this important means of salvation holy desires and resolutions were more happily nourished, defended, and strengthened than they could be elsewhere."

Some very extraordinary illustrations of his power to persuade men and women to seek the Lord were witnessed at a place called Sparnock. "In meeting the class," he writes, "I had a precious time; my soul was like a watered garden." The next morning he was invited to visit a woman who apparently was at the brink of death. Her ghastly aspect, and the fact that, though she had been three years a member of the society, she had not received the remission of her sins, caused him "to feel no little concern" for her soul. Let us note his manner of dealing with this distressing case.

Standing at her bedside he fixed his tearful eyes upon the invalid, and with much tenderness of tone asked her, "For what end do you suppose Jesus Christ came into the world?"

"To save sinners," replied the gasping sufferer.

He then told her that Jesus was unchangeable, was as willing to save her then as he ever would be; that salvation was received by simple faith, which, when exercised by any penitent sinner, was counted for righteousness. And then he added with emphasis and feeling: "It is a *duty* which God requires of you to believe in Jesus and in the truth of his promises."

All this was very plain, very simple, and in substance what she had heard times without number. But falling from Carvosso's lips, it sounded to the woman like a new revelation from heaven. An unwonted strangeness of manner came over her. She seemed to all present to be dying. A few moments passed when, suddenly lifting her hands and eyes to heaven, she cried out:

"Glory be to God, I am healed, I am healed. The Lord has healed me, body and soul."

She continued in this state of ecstasy for some time. The news of her marvelous conduct and cure was quickly spread through the neighborhood. The people crowded the chamber. Carvosso kneeled down, and mingled his prayers and

praises with the woman's joyous cries. While he was praying, two souls were powerfully convicted and cried aloud for mercy. So deep was their distress that it was four hours before Carvosso could find it in his heart to leave them.

The woman's health was restored from that memorable hour. Whether her disease was nervous, and her sudden healing was caused by the influence of her mental exultation, as is probable, or whether her cure was wrought by the direct act of the Master of life, we will not pretend to decide, not knowing all the details of her case. But so evident was the divine presence and power in her glorious conversion and in the awakening of her two curious neighbors, that a great revival followed. The same day a woman in the house where Carvosso was a guest was awakened and converted. The next day another young woman sought him at the home of the restored invalid. Like her, this inquirer was a member of society who had never enjoyed the forgiveness of sin. After talking with him awhile and passing through many alternations

of feeling, she exclaimed in a tone of desperation:

“I will believe, I will believe!”

True to this resolution, she did look into the face of Jesus, where she saw a look of pitying love which overwhelmed her with joy and caused her to “shout aloud the praises of God.”

Carvosso, after a prayer of rejoicing, “accompanied her to her class, where,” he says, “her testimony set all her class-mates on fire with divine love.”

Going home from class this happy girl told the story of her Lord’s love to her wondering friends with such power that her sister, who had already retired, but at whose bedside she stood and talked, was cut to the heart. So thorough was her awakening that she arose, dressed, and, accompanied by her father and her happy sister, went through the dark and silent streets to seek Carvosso. When they reached his lodging, he and his host were retiring to rest. The knocking startled them. His host opened the door. The penitent girl rushed in, with no more cere-

mony than was shown by the Philippian jailer to the Apostle Paul and his friend Silas, and exclaimed:

“What must I do to be saved?”

Prayer and counsel followed, but the girl had not faith to cast the burden of her guilt on Jesus. Hence, she had to bear it home again. The next morning, however, while Carvosso was pleading for her in earnest prayer, her bonds were broken and she entered into the liberty of the children of God. Her wise counselor was filled with gladness, and exclaimed, in his record of the fact:

“How delightful a work it is to be thus employed in fishing for souls!”

Of the genuineness of these remarkable conversions Carvosso had delightful evidence when, visiting Sparnock four years afterwards, he said of these converts:

“I rejoiced to find them still graciously preserved, with their souls truly alive to God. It was with divine satisfaction I met them in class on Sunday morning; and there also I met with

my dear sister Oats, whose body the Lord restored so remarkably at the time of her conversion. She now appeared in such a happy state of body and mind that I was constrained to say, 'Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, for his wonderful works to the children of men.' "



Chapter VIII.

CARVOSSO A READY SOUL-WINNER.

CARVOSSO'S *readiness* to act for his Master was a marked feature in his character. As the sight of a bird causes the fowler instinctively to raise his fowling piece, to take instant aim, so did the presence of an approachable sinner rouse his benevolent impulses, and move him to action. As an example of this instinctive movement, we record the fact that as he was walking to Church one Sabbath morning, in company with a Mr. Earle, they approached a gentleman who was a little before them. Pointing toward this person, Mr. Earle said:

“There goes another backslider.”

In a moment Carvosso stepped forward, took

the gentleman's arm, and asked in his own impressive way:

“What harm did Jesus ever do you, that you should turn your back upon him?”

This was very abrupt; but for its tenderness of tone it might have been regarded as offensively abrupt. We advise no one to imitate its bluntness. It probably startled the gentleman, but it appears that Carvosso, without giving him time to reply, proceeded at once to entreat him to return to the Lord. So wondrously effective and suitable was his plea that the man promised to do so, and actually appeared that very day at the class-meeting “bringing another poor wanderer with him.”

During Carvosso's prayer, “the power of God descended.” Both backsliders were “cut to the heart.” So earnest were they that they continued in prayer for the space of three hours, when the Lord was pleased to bestow upon them a sense of his pardoning mercy. What a class-meeting! With such incidents constantly occurring, can any one be at a loss to account for

Carvosso's success as a class-leader? It would have been a marvel, indeed, if he had failed to win his merited renown.

The reader must not infer from the preceding fact that abruptness was characteristic of this great laborer for souls, nor that his method of dealing with souls was in any sense stereotyped. No doubt he was always very direct and pointed in his speech. Had his eyes been hard and his tones harsh, perhaps his words might have been often deemed offensively abrupt. Take, for illustration, a remark he once made to a man who was drunk. The poor fellow was a miner. He had been away from home three days on a drinking bout. His wife had been to seek him; had lured him away from his vile companions, and was trying to get him home. It was a Sabbath morning. As Carvosso, with some friends, was leaving the chapel, he saw the reeling wretch staggering past. Stepping to his side he placed a hand upon his shoulder and said :

“ Young man, you do not know where you are going ? ”

“Yes I do,” replied the drunken fellow, with a rude leer; “I am trying to make the best of my way home.”

“That is not what I mean,” rejoined Carvosso. “Do you know that you are in the road to hell, and if you do not stop you will soon be there?”

This, to a drunken man, was not conciliatory, but seemingly better adapted to irritate than to win. Yet it was God’s arrow. It sobered the man in less than two minutes. Before he had walked the next mile he was so burdened with a sense of guilt that, leaving his companions, he sought a solitary place in a field, dropped on his knees, and cried several hours to God for mercy. Ignorant of the way of faith, he found no relief. Yet the arrow in his heart was barbed and could not be easily extracted. The poor man persisted several months, until finally he found lasting “peace with God.”

On another occasion, when at a place named Camborne, Carvosso began talking with a man who was “quite unconcerned about his soul.” For an hour he reasoned as did Paul before Felix,

“of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,” but with less effect. The man was too hardened to tremble. Perceiving that his words were but as water dropping on a rock, Carvosso said, “I wish you well,” and left the room. But while his hand was still upon the door-handle an impression fell upon his mind that he ought to give the stubborn man another warning. Obeying this impulse, he opened the door, went back, and said:

“If you do not reduce to practice what I have delivered to you, I shall appear in the judgment of the great day to condemn you.”

Assuredly this was a somewhat brusque form of speech, especially as the man addressed was an entire stranger. Nevertheless, it was as the hammer which breaks the flint. Carvosso did not wait to discover this at the time, but was informed the next morning that William Mean, the man in question, was “distressed about his soul.” Our soul-winner immediately went to see him, and found the stony-hearted sinner of the day before a weeping penitent, who greeted him by saying:

“All that you said to me yesterday made no impression on my mind till you returned and uttered the last words. It then very forcibly struck me that God had sent you to warn me from the wrath to come.”

Carvosso's clear unfolding of the willingness of God to save sinners and of the way of faith soon led this penitent miner to “rejoice in a sin-pardoning God.” The work was genuine. The man adorned his profession three years, and then ascended to heaven amid the noise and smoke of an explosion in the mine in which he wrought.

Let no Christian laborer infer from these facts that brusque sentences are always effective weapons in this divine warfare, or that they are suitable, even on occasions, for all to employ. Gentleness, tact, sweetness, and courtesy must characterize the speech and manner of him who would win souls. Harsh words abruptly spoken are sure to alarm the pride, provoke the anger, and excite the hostility of the ungodly. They are also out of keeping with the end sought, which is beneficent and requires affectionate

means for its accomplishment. The abrupt approach of Carvosso to the backslider, his stern warning to the reeling drunkard, and his brusque threat of appearing in the judgment against the miner, were departures from his usual manner. Moreover, in his mouth such words fell with a spiritual intensity which touched the conscience before pride had time to take alarm. They were like arrows which burned at the instant of striking, because they expressed the most profound truths in a tone, with an emphasis and depth of feeling, which convinced the hearer that the speaker believed his own awful utterances. Indeed, this good man lived in such intimate communion with the invisible world, that it dwelt as a tremendous reality in his imagination. The judgment and the hell of which he spoke with the certainty that the man to whom he was speaking would be condemned in the one and punished eternally in the other, were not dreamy sentimentalities, floating like cloud-pictures in his mind, but stupendous facts, which roused his sympathies and nerved him to speak so that he might, if possible,


save. Hence his voice was to the sinner as the cry of fire at night awakening the sleeper to see fiery tongues of flame ready to devour him.

But as we have already intimated, abrupt and brusque sayings were exceptional even with Carvosso. His general manner, says his biographer, "was so simple, so affectionate, so faithful, and so forcible, that it seldom failed to arrest the attention and move the best feelings of the heart. His tears, his emphasis, his appeals to the conscience, his full and manifest confidence in the reality and worth of the things he spoke of, and his devout aspirations for a divine blessing on what he said, all conspired to produce such impressions as it was not easy for any one to efface, however little love he had for religion."



Chapter IX.

CARVOSSO'S PERSISTENCE IN SOUL-WORK.

NOTHER of Carvosso's distinguishing traits was his habit of persevering in whatever he undertook until his aim was accomplished. This habit grew out of his great will-force. Once set on an object, his strong will called all the powers of his nature into their highest possible activity. If obstacles arose, instead of cooling they stimulated his purpose and excited him to more intense efforts. Undaunted by opposition, he pressed on toward his chosen object with no thought of weariness or failure. It was this untiring will-power which enabled him, in spite of his poverty, to transform the "desert" farm at St. Gluvias into fruitful fields, and to wring from its reluctant soil that "mod-

erate competency" which was the aim of his earthly ambition.

To this persistent will-force Carvosso was largely indebted for his success as a Christian worker. When he approached a sinner, his determination to win his allegiance to Christ was so intensely strong that the person felt himself to be in the presence of a thoroughly earnest, sincere man, who was determined to gain his point. By the law of mental sympathy, the weaker will shrunk as from a strife in which it was sure to be subdued. And even with a will of equal strength he had the advantage of being charged with heavenly fire. As the sinner listened to appeals to which his conscience thundered Amen, his will, after its first efforts at resistance were overcome, became almost passive, and the truth found admission to his understanding. Then Carvosso's tenderness touched his feelings. If the person offered objections, Carvasso beat them to pieces with Scripture texts and battered down all his excuses with affectionate exhortations until, driven to the wall, he yielded and suffered himself to be

led to the Mercy Seat. A few illustrations of this feature of Carvosso's work can not but be profitable to the reader.

He was riding horseback one day in company with a man who, for seven years, had lived in "an awful state of backsliding from God." So fearful had been this poor creature's fall that, seeing no means of escape from his unhappy bondage, he was sinning on in a spirit of dogged despair. The man's desperate condition roused Carvosso's sympathies, and he says, "I would not let him go till I had his promise that he would again commence a life of prayer that very night." The promise wrung out of him by persistent entreaty was sacredly kept, and on a subsequent occasion our faithful laborer rejoiced to meet and find him standing fast in the faith.

On another occasion he was informed that a certain young lady in the neighborhood was very sick with consumption, and that her medical attendant had given up all hope of saving her life. Instantly his heart was stirred with compassion for her soul, and he said to several of his friends:

“I will go and see her.”

“It is no use,” replied one, who knew the maiden. “She hates religion and religious people.”

“It may be so, but I will try to gain access to her, and, if I can, have some conversation with her about her soul,” rejoined this man, whom nothing could discourage.

Guided by his hallowed purpose, he called at the maiden’s home, and being permitted to meet her mother, asked if he might see the afflicted girl.

“She has not yet come down stairs,” said the mother, courteously; “but I will tell her you are here, sir.”

The mother went up-stairs, and soon returned to say,

“She does not wish to see you.”

Many, perhaps most Christians, would have been satisfied, after this rebuff, to leave the irreligious maiden to her fate. But Carvosso’s persevering nature would not permit him so to abandon her. He says that his repulse “did not

dishearten me nor quench my desire for her salvation;" but it did suggest to him that if he saw her at all he "must come upon her unawares." Accordingly, after waiting two hours, he again went to the house, was admitted, and "found her sitting by the fire."

Her "exceedingly pale and deathly appearance" touched his tenderest sympathies and led him to speak very gently and affectionately respecting her affliction. Having thus drawn her into friendly conversation, he at length opened the religious question by asking,

"Do you believe there is a God?"

"Yes," retorted the maiden, very sharply.

"And do you believe that he knows the secret thoughts of your heart?"

"Yes," replied the girl, in a tone less acrid than before.

"But do you think you have ever sinned against this God?"

"O yes," she replied, somewhat seriously, very much to her questioner's satisfaction.

"And now," asked Carvosso, solemnly, "are

you willing to die in your present state of mind?"

This inquiry moved her to frankly confess that she was not. And then the tender-hearted Carvosso spoke to her of Jesus, of repentance, and of her need of faith, until her heart softened and she burst into tears. He continued to set Christ before her by quoting the promises of Holy Writ and citing verses from our admirable hymns, and at length closed the interview with prayer.

Still clinging to his purpose not to rest until he saw her happy in Christ, he called again the next morning. Her smile of welcome when he entered told him that she was no longer unwilling to listen to the claims of religion. She had, indeed, become an anxious inquirer, speaking freely and listening eagerly to his instructions. Her heart was wrought upon powerfully, and her abundant tears illustrated the depth of her penitence. He continued his visits until, four days after, "it pleased God to set her captive soul at liberty by the manifestation of his pardoning love."

His perseverance certainly saved the soul of that maiden, for she died not long after, "happy in the Lord."

Another interesting example of his characteristic habit of dealing with unwilling sinners occurred during one of his many visits to his native village, Mousehole. He was calling on a friend, when he noticed a member of the household retreating in haste by the back door. Understanding that she had fled to escape his conversation he expressed his regret, and added,

"I feel strongly inclined to follow her."

"It will be no use, for you can not overtake her," replied one of the family.

But our patriarch of nearly fourscore was not disposed to be so baffled. He rose from his seat, and going to the front door, saw the runaway maiden entering a neighbor's house. He followed her as fast as his aged limbs permitted, but seeing him enter the hall of her place of refuge, she darted up-stairs and out of sight.

Had he not done his duty in this case? Most Christian workers would have decided affirmatively; but this determined man saw one more effort possible. He would have acted imprudently had he ascended the stairs after her; but, though Carvosso could be *singular* when occasion required, he always tempered his zeal with prudence and, therefore, he paused. Knowing that, though he could not see her, she was yet within hearing, he looked up and addressed a solemn appeal to her conscience, closing his remarks by saying:

“Remember, God says except you repent you must perish. I have now faithfully warned you of your danger, and you must meet me at the bar of God, to give account of the use you make of it.”

Having discharged this Parthian arrow at the concealed maiden, he withdrew to labor with less hostile souls. But his words had been spoken in power; and before night he was told that the girl was an awakened sinner. Delighted to learn this good news, he went the next morn-

ing to see her. No longer desirous of shunning the patriarch's presence, she met him, "bitterly weeping because she had so long and grievously sinned against God," and she added:

"Every word you addressed to me yesterday went to my heart, though I could not see you; and such an impression was thereby made upon my mind as I could not shake off."

Judging her to be truly and deeply penitent, he at once preached Jesus to her eager ears, and soon had the sweet pleasure of hearing her "rejoice in the God of her salvation."

That her goodness was not like the morning cloud was shown by a letter she wrote some time after to her spiritual father in which she said:

" . . . While memory lasts I hope never to forget the first interview I had with you. Oh how sweet the recollection of that happy morning when I first felt the Savior's pardoning blood applied."

Perhaps there is no more striking instance of this good man's pertinacity in clinging to an awakened soul than the following: "He was at home one

day when a young man came running in breathless haste and saying:

“Please come with me, Mr. Carvosso. My father is so distressed about his soul that he is not able to go to sea.”

It then appeared that this awakened sailor had peremptorily forbidden his pious wife to attend class-meeting that day. With genuine Christian meekness the good woman submitted to his harsh command; but spent the class-hour in her chamber pouring out her soul to God. Unaware that her husband was within hearing, she expressed aloud the anguish of her wounded heart in prayer for his conversion. He heard her cries of afflicted love. His conscience was pricked. Conviction overwhelmed him, and he was like a heavy-laden man sinking in deep waters.

Such a case was sure to strain Carvosso's sympathies to the utmost. He says: “I talked to him and prayed with him for *about two hours*, till my bodily strength was quite spent, and I was obliged to retire to a friend's house and lie down to take a little rest.”

This was soul-work indeed! Think of a man seventy-nine years old spending two hours in exhausting endeavors to show a guilty sailor the way to the cross! See him tottering away with panting breath, from the scene of his effort to find a friend's bed on which to rest and recover his exhausted strength. That was genuine soul-love! That was personal effort of the sort that accomplishes results!

Physically exhausted, the dear old man slept awhile; but even in his sleep his mind labored for the guilty, weeping sailor. "When I awoke," he writes, "these words came to me with light and power, 'the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'"

Believing that these words were intended by the Holy Spirit as a message to the stricken sailor, he exclaimed: "This will do." Then hastily putting on the outer garments he had laid aside, he hurried with all the speed age would permit to the seaman's house. The agitated man was still on his knees. Taking down a Bible and putting his finger on the text quoted above,

he held it before the eyes of the penitent and, in the tone of one who fully believed his own words, explained:

“See, I have a proper discharge for you from the King himself!”

The sailor read the precious truth. He received it into his heart by faith. God made it balm to his wounded spirit. Lifting his horny hands and streaming eyes to heaven, he shouted:

“Glory be to God, Jesus hath died for me!”

Thus by means of that tenacious love for souls which led Carvosso to keep hold of the sinner he sought until he gained him for Christ was this man, whose feet had not crossed the threshold of the house of God for the twelve previous years, speedily brought into Christian liberty.

Carvosso's uncommon force of will was undoubtedly a gift of nature, as already remarked, but its application to soul-work was caused by that precious baptism of love for the souls of men which he received while on his farm at St. Gluvias. The former may not be fully attainable

by every Christian, though it may be approximated by self-discipline; but the latter, being a gift of the Holy Spirit, is within reach of all who choose to seek it by faith. Without that gift of divine charity, soul-work, if attempted, will be coldly, carelessly, ineffectually done. But with it, one enters into the spirit of Paul who had "continual sorrow in his heart," and could even wish himself separated from Christ "for his kinsmen according to the flesh." That is the spirit which conquers souls. Let him therefore who would emulate Carvosso seek Paul's spirit. Let him learn to resemble Mrs. Sigourney's ideal Christian worker to whom she beautifully says:

"Be faith, which looks above,
With prayer, your constant guest,
And wrap the Savior's changeless love
A mantle round your breast.
So shall you share the wealth
That earth may ne'er despoil,
And the blest Gospel's saving health
Repay your arduous toil."



Chapter X.

CARVOSSO IN THE CLASS-MEETING.

SIXTY years of voluntary work in one department of labor of any kind implies more than ordinary affection for its duties. In purely benevolent labor offering no pecuniary emolument, no earthly honors, nothing but spiritual satisfaction and unseen future rewards, the attachment which keeps the toiler in his chosen field must be strong as the love of life. Accordingly we are not surprised to find in Carvosso's memoirs abundant evidence that his love for the class-meeting, the chief sphere of his threescore years of Christian work, was cordial, deep, and undying. He served in it so unceasingly and so triumphantly because he loved it so dearly. To him it was not a mere

drill-room in which he had to perform certain duties in a mechanical, perfunctory manner; but it was a sacred spot, a Bethel, in which God was expected to manifest his glory; a spiritual battle-field, in which holy combats were to be fought and victories won; an arena of conflict, in which souls were to be wrested from the power of the evil one. Hence we find him saying:

“While at Plymouth I sometimes met three classes in a day, and I can truly say it is a work in which my soul delights. I love to prop the feeble, to bind up the broken hearted, and to proclaim liberty to the captives, to hold forth a full, free, and present salvation through faith alone in the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Love is life, and it made Carvosso a lively, effective leader. It led him into the class-room with elastic step, frank, open, moistened eyes, hearty but tremulous voice, cordial, winning manner, joyous but fervent spirit, and intellect quickened by the study of the Word and by the Holy Ghost. Under such a leader no class could be either dull or profitless. We are not,

therefore, surprised to find such entries as the following scattered all the way through his diary:

“While meeting one of the classes we had a very gracious visitation from above. One who had been for four years seeking the Lord, after a severe struggle with unbelief, was enabled to believe with her heart unto righteousness, and boldly testified that she had received forgiveness of sins. [Carvosso’s converts were never half-born.] Two others at the same time entered into the rest of full sanctification. At this time the language of my heart is:

‘Stretch my faith’s capacity
Wider and yet wider still;
Then with all that is in thee
My soul forever fill.’”

Again at Ponsanooth we find him “meeting the classes,” in which, he joyously says, “we had good times; our souls were watered with showers of divine grace, and our hopes began to revive that after our days of mourning, the Lord would revive his work.”

At Saltash he writes: “I remained here three

weeks, meeting the classes and visiting from house to house, and some souls were awakened and saved."

At Mylor Bridge he says: "In meeting the class I felt Christ was eminently present and precious. O Lord, make me more thankful for these bright manifestations of thy love to my soul!"

A few years later he writes: "I think I never did feel my heart so much delighted in the work of meeting classes as of late." Again he says, at a still later period, "In the course of the week I have met six different classes, with much pleasure and profit." At another time he says: "In meeting the class last night at Garrick my soul felt much of the inward heaven. Oh what a blessed light shined into my mind while I was giving out this beautiful verse—

‘Open my faith’s interior eye,
Display thy glory from above,
And all I am shall sink and die,
Lost in astonishment and love.’”

Shortly after he writes: "Great good was done in the class-meetings at Camborne, especially in

Captain L.'s, in which it was not uncommon for two or three to find peace in an evening. Into this class the people so crowded for some weeks that it could not be regularly met at all. As many, probably, as five hundred have been at one prayer-meeting."

When he was seventy-five years old he wrote: "I believe I never had greater pleasure in meeting classes—in laboring to prop the feeble knees, strengthen the hands that hang down, and press on, believing, to all the depths of humble love. . . . I met the Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday's classes, and we had most blessed seasons."

Further citation is surely needless on this point. His biography shows that his love of class-meeting work was as undying as his love for soul-work, which was never quenched until he entered the waters of death. Even when his body trembled beneath the weight of more than fourscore years, and he was so feeble at times as to be unable to converse at all except with great effort, the presence of an inquiring soul would rouse his energies

and kindle the ancient fire of his stronger days. His ruling passion would become an inspiration, and "he would maintain for hours an animated conversation on his beloved topics—pardon, holiness, and heaven."

His last class-meeting labors were at Camborne, where, with tottering steps, he went in and out among the classes, and where an eye-witness said of his visit to the place, "as it was his last, so, in some respects, it seemed to crown all his former visits." . . . "In one instance," said his biographer, "he labored for five successive hours in conversation with a person who had long been suffering under the power of unbelief, and at last his pious and mighty efforts were happily crowned with wonderful success."

Glorious old class-leader! Age had blanched his hair, furrowed his broad brow, bent his stalwart frame, and enfeebled his trembling limbs, but it had not and could not chill the fire of his love for souls or for the simple institution which had been the humble theater in which he had won countless victories for his Lord.

We have already mentioned the relation of his private personal efforts to his class-meeting work. The same motive—his passion for souls—inspired both, and he constantly made one tributary to the other. The awakened soul was led to the class to seek conversion. When there his presence gave the meeting a high character and thrilling interest. It begot a heavenly sympathy, a holy struggle in his behalf, and when he was saved a divine joy was kindled akin to that which ravishes angelic breasts when the news of a sinner's conversion is borne to heaven. Hence, in Carvosso's hands, the class-meeting was never dull, nor was it a place of mere sentimental religious rapture, where to have a "good time" was the chief end of the service. He made it a school of spiritual instruction and a field of spiritual conflict and victory. Hence we find him, when at Penzance, meeting "brother Boase's class," where "three entered into the liberty of perfect love. The next night," he adds, "I attempted to meet a class, but I was prevented by the number of people who crowded into the

room. It was an extraordinary time; many were filled and overpowered with the love of God."

The next morning he breakfasted with a lady who had long been a burning and shining light, and, he modestly adds, "It was while I was meeting a class at Camborne that she received power to believe unto full salvation."

Again we find him at Porthleven, going from house to house, reasoning with the people about righteousness and judgment to come, and inviting the seriously inclined to attend a class-meeting the next day. "At that meeting the Lord poured out his convincing Spirit, and four were deeply awakened. After a long and affecting struggle Christ appeared and set their souls at liberty."

At Ponsanooth, he writes, "While meeting one of the classes we had a very gracious visitation from above. One who had been four years seeking the Lord, after a severe struggle with unbelief, . . . boldly testified that she had received forgiveness of sins. Two others, the same time, entered into the rest of full sanctification."

At Sparnock he visited from house to house,

met all the classes, and "had the happiness of seeing two poor backsliders restored."

At Camborne his host, Captain Vivian, requested him to speak to his servant about her soul. "She was shy and reserved," and he found it difficult to make any impression upon her at first. His persistence conquered, however, and she promised to go to class. "The Lord met with her there, and she covenanted with him to give him her whole heart."

Three years after his retirement we find him at Mousehole once more, where, in connection with his class visitations, he says: "In my usual way, I went preaching from house to house." Very simple preaching, no doubt, but very effectual. In one house a penitent had her "broken heart" healed while he was talking to her about Jesus. Kneeling with her to thank God for his mercy, his praises were delightfully interrupted by the voice of the woman's brother crying "aloud for mercy in an astonishing manner." After a brief but profoundly earnest struggle in prayer, his soul was also "set at liberty."

Passing from this scene of Gospel triumph with a glad heart, Carvosso entered a neighboring house, where he told the story of these conversions with such force of expression and tenderness of feeling that it became "an arrow of truth" to the heart of a poor backslider who "trembled as in the presence of God." The next morning he found her weeping and willing to return to God. The following Sunday he found her in his favorite sphere of Christian work—the class-meeting—and rejoiced with her in the hope that they should meet in heaven.

These incidents are interesting in themselves. They are particularly valuable to class-leaders and other laborers, lay or clerical, in the Master's vineyard as showing the relation between private personal appeals to individuals and the manifestations of the Spirit in social and public meetings. All through the fruitful portion of Carvosso's career we find that his harvests reaped in the latter were very largely the fruit of seed sown in private. Strike his personal efforts with individuals out of his life, and it is impossible to believe

that he could have been the power he was in the class and prayer-meeting. It was the human ore dug in private by his ever diligent hands, and taken by him to the class and prayer meetings to be fused, melted, and wrought into the divine image, that gave those meetings their freshness and marvelously attractive power. Hence, as his biographer remarks, "his visits to a society were often regarded as a sort of era; for the expectation of the people and the fervor of his soul . . . often conspired to bring more than ordinary influences from above." This was quite natural. There is something so impressive, so moving, both on the heart and conscience, in the spectacle of a penitent soul struggling through the agonies of conviction into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, that men will flock to behold it. Any class-leader who, by his constant personal labors, or by those of his members who have caught his aggressive spirit, can make it almost a certainty that there will be a newly awakened soul at his class every week will never lack a full attendance. Let it be an established fact that his

class-room is an arena consecrated to real work, and it will possess an attraction that will keep it crowded. It is humdrum monotony and formal repetition of commonplace remarks which awaken no feeling, promote no growth, accomplish no results, that instead of attracting repel its members. The same result also follows in prayer-meetings which are not fed by personal effort on the part of pastor and people, and which consequently are not made the theaters of constant strife between heaven and hell for the conquest of souls.

It would probably be interesting to all and specially instructive to class-leaders if Carvosso had left the world some more detailed account of his methods of conducting a class-meeting. Our impression, derived from the study of his biography, is that he depended more upon spirit than method. To kindle anew the slumbering fires of devotion by singing in the spirit and by fervent prayer was evidently the first point at which he aimed. Then, we judge, he sought by a few fervid words to encourage aspirations in

believers for the present possession of a higher Christian life, and particularly for the consciousness of perfect love. If he found one earnestly seeking this priceless baptism he made that case special at once, and proceeded to urge the person to exercise immediate faith.

His method of treating such cases may be illustrated by his dealing with a young lady named Hearle. The incident occurred in her father's house; but, since his manner of treating seekers of full salvation was substantially the same in class-meeting as elsewhere, it may be accepted as a typical example of his method there. This young lady, having confessed that she was longing "to love God with all her heart," he asked her at a suitable moment:

"Can you *now* believe?"

"No," she replied. "I still feel a bar that prevents my laying hold."

Quoting Mr. Fletcher, Carvosso observed: "As when you reckon with your creditor, or with your host, and as when you have paid all, you reckon yourself free, so now reckon with God.

Jesus hath paid all, and hath paid all for thee! hath purchased pardon and holiness. Therefore it is now God's command; reckon thyself dead indeed unto sin, and thou art alive unto God from this hour. Oh begin—begin to reckon now. Fear not. Believe, believe, believe! And continue to believe every moment, so shalt thou continue free."

Encouraged by his earnest words, Miss Hearle rested in the divine promise. The words, "Fear not," touched her heart. She wept tears of hallowed joy, believed, and found sweet rest of spirit. "So powerful was the change wrought in her soul that her whole frame was thereby greatly affected."

An incident of his visit to meet the classes at Tuckingmill gives us some insight into *his method of dealing with serious persons in class*; it also shows how he followed up class-work with personal home visitation.

In one of those Tuckingmill classes he spoke to a woman who was "a poor, heavy-laden penitent." His words opened the flood-gates of

penitential sorrow in her awakened heart. Her strong cries made it impossible for him to give her intelligent counsel; and, therefore, he stopped speaking, fell upon his knees and poured forth his soul in her behalf. On asking her "how she felt," she replied, with seeming evasion:

"I see I must go home and pray more."

Knowing Satan's devices, and suspecting this to be one, Carvosso rejoined:

"There is no necessity for that. The Lord is here, and is now waiting to bless you. There is nothing wanting but for you to believe in Christ as your Savior. And if he died for you, ought you not at once to believe in him and love him?"

These simple words earnestly, tenderly spoken, led the weeping woman to lift her weary eyes from herself to the crucified One. The heavenly light soon streamed from his smiling face upon her struggling soul. In a moment her bonds were broken, her fears flown; her burden was gone, and she joyfully exclaimed:

"Now I know my sins are forgiven!"

This was a clear conversion, and it made the class-meeting a glorious place. Most leaders would have been content to leave the convert, at least for a time. Not so Carvosso. He knew that such sudden bursts of joy are often followed by fierce temptation and distressing doubts. Hence, the next day he sought her in her home, and to his great delight found her not only happy, but spending the day as holy time, omitting her ordinary household work. Grasping the good leader's hand she exclaimed with intense feeling:

"I have set apart this day to praise the Lord for what he did for my soul yesterday."

All leaders can not find time to follow up converts in this prompt way. But a genuine passion for souls will move every leader to attempt it if it be at all possible. Soul-love is a spur to efforts that would be deemed impossible by a dead heart.

Carvosso made free and happy use of Scripture both in the class-room and in private personal effort. The following illustration of his

mode of employing the Divine Word both in and out of the class is only one of many instances that might be cited.

Going by request one day to see a gentleman who had been an invalid five years, he was pained to hear this son of affliction say:

“I have read. I have prayed. The clergyman has come and given me the sacrament, but all seems to be of no use.”

“No,” replied Carvosso, “‘it is not of works, lest any man should boast.’”

Then taking the Bible he opened it at 1 Peter ii, 24, and said, “Please read that verse yourself.”

The man proceeded to read these precious words: “Who bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness; with whose stripes we are healed.”

The effect was marvelous and instantaneous. The invalid’s heart was thrilled with wonder as at an unlooked-for discovery. Turning his pale face upon his venerable instructor, while tears

began to stream down his sunken cheeks, he cried out:

“It was faith I wanted. I could never read for myself before.”

The light so long sought in vain now streamed from heaven upon his emancipated soul, and the invalid “rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

This delightful end was reached half an hour after Carvosso entered his chamber. Doubtless his conversation prepared the sufferer to exercise faith, but it was the selection of a suitable text and the tact of presenting it, as containing a truth to be then and there accepted by himself, which opened his eyes. There is no weapon so certain to secure results as a wise use of the words of God. In Carvosso's hands it often proved to be a sharp sword of heavenly temper.

He made similar and frequent use of our Church hymns. Writing of the Wesleyan hymn-book he truthfully says, it “contains a body of divinity,” and adds: “When conversing with penitents, and offering them a present salvation,

through faith alone in the blood of Christ, how often has God owned this verse and set their souls at liberty:

‘Believe in Him that died for thee,
And, sure as he hath died,
Thy debt is paid, thy soul is free,
And thou art justified.’ ”

His manner of using a hymn is shown in the following incident. Addressing a serious-minded woman, he asked:

“Do you love God?”

“Yes; but there is something I still want.”

A brief conversation drew from the woman the admission that she had never received the gift of pardon, though very desirous of it. At length he said with solemn emphasis:

“You may receive this blessing now.”

Then taking the hymn-book, he turned to the fourth stanza of the hymn numbered 367 in our “Hymnal,” and which is quoted above, and asked her to read it aloud. When she had read the first phrase of the third line, “Thy debt is paid,” he placed his thumb on the following

words, looked earnestly into her face, and asked:

“Do you think it is *paid*?”

Instantly the woman felt “shut up unto faith.” Her heart trusted her Redeemer. She burst into a flood of tears, and was “made happy from that moment.”

His skill in making the way of faith plain was certainly remarkable and contributed materially to his success in winning souls, both in class-meeting and elsewhere. Yet it involved nothing profound; nothing which most soul-winners may not attain. It was in truth extremely simple, and was derived chiefly from his own clear experience and the constant activity of his mind upon it. This mental concentration led him to perceive illustrations of it in common objects as occasion called. As, for instance, when he entered a poor man's house one morning, he found him blowing the fire with the bellows. Knowing him to be an anxious seeker of salvation, he said:

“John, if you had half as much faith in Jesus

Christ as you have in those bellows, you would be set at liberty in a moment."

This homely, pertinent, personal presentation of faith opened the poor man's eyes. He saw in a moment the folly of his obstinate unbelief, let it go, grasped God's promise of mercy, and was washed from the guilt of his sins.

Precious indeed to every class-leader and soul-winner is this power to explain the way of faith! We do not think it difficult of attainment by any intelligent person who is himself a believer. Faith is extremely simple in itself; and he who sincerely searches for objects with which to illustrate it, will have little difficulty in finding them. Let every class-leader fill his mind with them.



Chapter XI.

CARVOSSO THE SUB-PASTOR OF HIS CLASSES.

BEFORE treating of Carvosso's pastoral work a few words respecting the origin of the class and class-meeting will not be out of place.

For three years after the organization of Methodist societies the class had no existence. Though proposed at first as a means of collecting weekly contributions from the members of the societies, yet its highest value as viewed by Wesley was that by its means he might "come to a sure, thorough knowledge of each member." As Methodism grew, its value, yea its necessity, as a means of securing moral discipline in societies having itinerant ministers, who once "spent

scarcely a day at a time in any one place," became impressively apparent. Such a ministry needed the class-leader to supply its inability to give suitable pastoral care to the people. Hence the idea of a sub-pastorate is inseparable from a true conception of the class-leader's office.

It may be well also to note that the class existed before the class-meeting. At Bristol, the original class-leaders held no meetings at first, but visited their members weekly at their homes to receive their contributions and "to make particular inquiry into the behavior of the members whom they visited." Finding this measure profitable in Bristol, Wesley divided the societies in London into classes, that he might "come to a sure, thorough knowledge of each member." To this end, "at first the leaders visited each member at his own house; but this was soon found to be inconvenient. It required more time than the leaders had to spare, and many members lived with masters, mistresses, or relations, where it was almost impossible for such visits to be made. Hence, before long it was agreed that

each leader should meet his apportioned members all together once a week."*

These historic statements make it clear that the ideas of convenience and practicality originated the class-meeting. Had the original leaders been men of leisure and all their members householders, one, if not the chief, end of the class might have been accomplished without the weekly *meeting*. No doubt the latter, as a sphere for the enjoyment of Christian fellowship, for instruction in experimental godliness, for the cultivation of the devotional spirit, added vastly to the value of the class. Neither can it be questioned that it was made the duty of its members to *meet their leader* at the appointed time and place; nor that the principal sphere of the leader's work, after the change was made, was to be in the class-meeting. But it can not be admitted that the duty of the leader "to see each person in his class once a week at least," is fully performed unless all his members are present. He does not

*Tyerman's "Life of Wesley," Vol. I, p. 379.

see *absentees*. By placing emphasis on the phrase "*in his class*," he may enter a plea that his duty ends if he is constant at the meeting. But the rule does not admit of such a narrow interpretation. It requires him to see every member of his class "*once a week at least*," in the class-meeting if possible, but at their homes if their absence from the meeting prevents him from seeing them there. The design of the class institution, says our present Discipline, "*is a sub-pastoral oversight that shall effectively reach every member of the Church*." This design might, indeed, be accomplished as at the first without the *meeting*, though more easily and thoroughly with it. But the neglect of the members to attend the meeting does not justify the leader in remaining ignorant of their manner of life and of their religious experience. His duty under the rule still is, either in the meeting or by personal visitation, or both, to reach every member of his class, "*once a week at least*." Therefore no leader can be considered a faithful "*sub-pastor*" who designedly or from slothfulness leaves his

absent members unvisited. If his class be very large and his members widely scattered, he may not be able to keep the *letter* of the rule and see them every week. But if he will maintain its *spirit*, he must see them often enough to know their spiritual condition, and to watch over their souls.

Carvosso, both in theory and practice, accepted this broad and lofty conception of a class-leader's duty. His theory is well expressed in a letter to a brother leader whose zeal, he suspected, was declining. We quote his words:

“MY DEAR JOSEPH:— . . . With respect to visiting [class members] from house to house: when you were first fixed as a leader, I know it was your meat and drink to do it, for the salvation of their souls lay near your heart. If they discover less diligence and love manifested toward them in this respect it is apt to discourage them, and lessen their esteem for their leader. . . . I wish you to look well to those precious souls put under your care; that in the great day . . . you may be enabled

to say: 'Here am I, Lord, and those committed to my care; not one of them is wanting.' "

Let the reader contrast this admirable appeal to a brother leader with the theory and spirit of some of our modern cold-hearted class-leaders. Carvosso's ideal was his friend Joseph, so in love with the souls of his members that it was his meat and drink to visit them at their homes, whether absentees or not; but cold-hearted leaders are so lacking in soul-love that they almost angrily disclaim the slightest sense of obligation to visit even the wanderers from their classes and from Christ. Carvosso's ideal must guard against a measure of neglect which may, in the least, discourage his members or lower that esteem for himself which is essential to his beneficial influence over them; but these are reckless of the consequences of their official indifference and neglect. Carvosso would have his ideal work under the spur of responsibility; he would have him drawn to it by the attraction of a joyful accountability for his stewardship; but these perfunctory leaders recognize such responsibility

but faintly, if at all; and the grand conception of an approved stewardship rouses no spiritual enthusiasm in their passionless souls. Carvosso gives the key-note of his ideal leader's triumphant judgment song, in the expressive phrase, "Not one of them is wanting;" but our leader with a frozen soul has so little feeling for his charge, that he has never imagined himself with it before the bar of judgment. He knows, but scarcely mourns, that many are wandering now; how many will be missing then, is a question his heart refuses earnestly to entertain.

There is a vast difference between such men and Carvosso's ideal. We believe, however, that the number of such unworthy leaders is happily small. Would there were none of them. It is such as they who bring the institution into contempt. They do not comprehend the nature of the work they have undertaken. That passion for souls which is necessary to success in all religious work, especially in class-leading, is not in them. They are, consequently, the worst enemies of the class-meeting, and should not be permitted

to carry its standards. The battle-flags of the Church should be intrusted to none but men who, like Carvosso, have been baptized with the spirit of the second great commandment.

Having glanced at Carvosso's ideal of a leader's duty to visit his members, we may feel sure that in practice he did not fall behind his theory. There was no sentimentalism or hypocrisy in his nature. He always coined his beliefs into actions. As we have seen, he had received through the baptism of the Spirit a passionate, enduring love for souls. He was also the possessor of a profound feeling of obligation as a sub-pastor of the flock of Christ, to spare no possible effort for the promotion of the faith of his class members and the restoration of any who might chance to wander from the fold. Hence his biography exhibits him constantly going to their homes where, moved by the yearnings of love and the spur of obligation, he instructed the ignorant, warned the wavering, rebuked the stubbornly backslidden, wooed the wanderer, comforted the sorrowful, and encouraged the faithful.

Let us join him in some of his many visits of love to the homes of class members.

Shortly after his retirement from the labors of his farm, we find him on a visit to his old friends at Mousehole, the scene of his first labors as a class-leader. Of this visit he says:

“I rejoiced to see my old friends and companions, but was sorry to find that some in whose welfare I felt much interest had grown weary in well doing. *Constrained by love I went immediately in pursuit of the wanderers.*”

In this extract we see the spirit of the true class-leader. In what followed we behold its result. He instantly went to the home of two backsliders. They received him coldly at first; but before he left them they melted, and he writes: “On Sunday I had them both at class-meeting with me. No tongue can express, no heart can conceive, the joy arising from such a sight as this!” Assuredly, that leader whose half-frozen heart refuses to go into the wilderness after the wanderers from his little flock will never either conceive or even taste such delicious joy as

ravished the faithful Carvosso's heart. And remark, these straying sheep were the subjects not of his present but of his former sub-pastoral care. Soul-love is an enduring passion.

In the same spirit we find him at a place called Callington, searching for the fruit of former labors. "Great was my joy to find some steadfast to whom God had before made me useful," he writes, and then he exclaims, "If such be our feelings on earth what will be our joy when we meet in heaven!"

But a cloud floated over this bright prospect of faith in the form of one of his spiritual children who had "wandered from God." Instantly his Christ-like spirit was filled with "much compassion;" the genuineness of which is proven in that he "sought her out" and, he says, "my bowels yearned over her." Not once or twice only did he go in search of this strayed lamb; but he had "frequent conversations with her." His persistence finally conquered her obstinacy, and the "Lord again touched her heart, and she deeply lamented her revolt from him."

The perfunctory leader who will not follow those who refuse to meet him in the class-room would have let that soul perish. By means of this visiting leader she was restored to the fold, and "since this," he wrote, "she has gone well."

In the same place he found "another poor backslider," for whose recovery he was especially moved to labor, because she was the wife of a dear Christian friend. Again his entreaties were successful, and he says, "she was reawakened, and went with me to the class-meeting."

Ever on the wing in his Lord's work our unresting leader went from Callington to Wisewandron. Here he found "two friends who had cast away their confidence." Their cases seem to have been aggravated, for we find him saying: "I reproved them for their cowardice, and told them of the stab they had given to experimental religion." This reproof was evidently tempered by his abounding affection, for he adds, "I encouraged them again to look to the Savior." His loving reproof was effectual. "Before I left,"

he writes, "they were restored to the joy of God's salvation."

He mentions a very sad, touching instance of his persistent, though unsuccessful, pursuit of one willful wanderer from one of his little flocks. She was a young lady who for several years adorned her profession and thereby comforted his heart. At length she listened to the voices of the world, and "departed from God. . . . I followed her closely in her wanderings from the fountain of living waters," say our faithful leader, "and frequently invited her, warned her, and entreated her to return, but at length she gave me a flat denial, saying:

" 'I shall never join the society at ———. ' "

This was decisive, repulsive even, and few class-leaders would have continued after the exhibition of this spirit to visit such a stubborn backslider. But Carvosso hoped against hope, and clung to her as a father to a perishing child. She had a fearful dream. The visions of the night aroused her conscience, and her screams of terror awoke the alarmed inmates of her home. The next

morning when pressed for an explanation of her fright, she said:

“I dreamed I was dying unprepared, and that I saw Satan standing by the bedside waiting to carry away my departing soul.”

Upon being informed of this frightful dream Carvosso again sought her out and, among other earnest pleas, said with patriarchal tenderness:

“This dream is certainly an awful warning from God. I beseech you not to persist in grieving, lest you quench the Spirit.”

His pleadings were vain. She would not yield. Shortly after, she became a bride, and then her indefatigable leader made her still another visit. Going to her bridal home, he again besought her to return to her Savior. But she was obdurate still, and he left her deeply grieved at her obstinacy and mourning over his fruitless efforts to lead her back to the fold of the Good Shepherd.

The end of that determined backslider came soon after very suddenly. She was stricken with mortal sickness one Friday, but her friends concealed

from her the dangerous nature of her illness until just before she expired the following Tuesday. Recording her death Carvosso remarked: "I had many sorrowful reflections;" but among his thoughts there was not a whisper of self-reproach. He had done what he could.

These examples of pastoral fidelity are beautiful. They should be stimulating to living class-leaders. It may be objected that since they relate to visits paid to the members of classes other than his own, they are not in point. To this we reply that there is no question but that it was his habit to visit his own members with unresting fidelity. Indeed, while all souls were dear to him for his beloved Master's sake, the members of his own classes were doubly endeared to him as his spiritual children. The incidents just related fairly show the spirit in which he prosecuted his special work through his sixty years of class work. And it was this spirit of love yearning with inexpressible anxiety over a straying one and sparing no practicable effort for his recovery that made him a beloved and

successful class-leader. Would that the mantle of his loving zeal rested on the fifty thousand class-leaders now in the Methodist Episcopal Church!

We should not be doing full justice to the zeal of this devoted class-leader were we to omit all reference to still another means he employed for the benefit of his spiritual children; namely, religious correspondence. The reader has been informed of his acquisition of the art of writing when he was sixty-five years old. This was itself a remarkable achievement. But that after this advanced period of life he should acquire such skill in writing letters on the spiritual life as to make it contribute to the happiness of very many souls is indeed, as his biographer suggests, phenomenal. It was, in truth, one of the fruits of that undying passion for souls which made him the delight of his classes and the converter of many from the error of their ways.

The extent and utility of his letter writing were as remarkable as his success in class-leading. His son remarks: "He wrote hundreds of

letters, and yet I believe not a page or a letter was ever written by him on any other topic than experimental and practical godliness. . . . He had a circle of correspondents more numerous than that of most men, and if he never attained the character of a complete scribe, he learned to communicate his thoughts with ease and comparative perspicuity to any part of the globe in a hand little short of elegant for an aged person. He put to paper matter enough to fill many volumes, lived to see his epistles esteemed and desired alike by the humble laborer and the learned counsel, the illiterate servant girl and the accomplished lady. What was far better to him than all this, he had the great happiness of knowing that his letters did good to souls redeemed by the blood of Jesus."

A specimen of his manner in these epistolary products of his unflagging zeal and of his unsleeping watchfulness for the spiritual children of his care is given in the letter to the young class-leader cited in this chapter. Like all he wrote, it is characterized by the fidelity of love.

The leisure of his nineteen years of retirement from business gave him opportunity for this work of following up the labors of the class and prayer-meeting. The like opportunity is not possessed by leaders who are men of active business, but his example suggests even to them that there are cases in which a brief letter from a leader to a discouraged or wandering member may possibly accomplish what spoken words have failed to do. And "*to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*"



Chapter XII.

CARVOSSO'S EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCES.

WHEN “Christian,” in the Interpreter’s house, saw a man pouring water on a fire which burned, nevertheless, with increasing brightness, he very naturally wondered at the phenomenon. His wonder ceased, however, when he was led by his friend the Interpreter behind the fireplace, and saw a person assiduously pouring in oil to feed the fire, which was thereby rendered unquenchable.

One can not help sharing “Christian’s” surprise when one looks at Carvosso’s unquenchable zeal. From the time of its breaking forth while he was as yet a busy farmer at St. Gluvias to the period of his prostration by old age and mortal sickness—a period of some thirty-two years—it burned not

only with a steady but with an increasing fervor. During the last nineteen of those years his labors were abundant and incessant except when interrupted by occasional illness. Without fee or reward he traveled from town to town, at all seasons and with little regard for cold or heat, visiting countless classes and prayer-meetings; going from house to house, from one sick chamber to another, and talking to saints and sinners on streets and highways. In the brief interval between these almost unceasing journeys, he kept his pen busy writing to seekers, converts, and spiritual friends, on the great theme of salvation. He was neither cloyed by success nor discouraged by defeat, and when the weight of more than fourscore years bowed his reverend head and caused his venerable frame to totter his loving zeal for souls was, if possible, more fresh and vigorous than at the beginning. We do not say that this inexhaustible freshness in Christian work is unparalleled, because the Church has had many laborers who, like him, wrought from youth to hoary age; but

all things in his life considered, we firmly believe that no lay laborer ever excelled William Carvosso in freshness of love for souls, in persistent, industrious, successful Christian work. It is, therefore, an inquiry as important as interesting, What was the source of his zeal? How was its fire maintained? Whence came the oil that fed the flames which nothing but the cold waters of death could quench?

We have already observed in Chapter vi, that it was many years after Carvosso received that baptism of the Spirit by which his love to Christ became his ruling passion, before his power as a leader and worker for souls became manifest. We have striven to account for this peculiarity in his experience, for such it must be regarded. Nevertheless, the birth of his zeal, late though it was, must be accepted as a fruit of his entire submission to God, inasmuch, as the reader will recollect, he no sooner recognized the call of duty to labor for souls than he obeyed it with all his characteristic earnestness. There was no parleying, no hesitation. The voice of God com-

manded, as he believed, and he went to work at once. Beyond all question his love of souls was a stream which had its source in the fullness of his love for Christ. And it was by the culture of that holy love, as we shall presently see, that his zeal continued to be a perennial spring.

One effect of this sacred self-culture was that he "had seasons of remarkable visitation from the presence of the Lord." One of these was granted him about two years before his entrance on the St. Gluvias farm. He was walking along the public highway when, feeling a desire for special communion with God, he crossed into an adjacent field, kneeled down, and began to pray. "In a short time," he writes, "I was so visited from above and overpowered by the divine glory that my shouting could be heard at a distance. It was a weight of glory that I seemed incapable of bearing in the body, and I therefore cried out (perhaps unwisely), 'Lord, stay thine hand!' In this glorious baptism these words came to my heart with indescribable power: 'I have sealed thee unto the day of redemption.'"

This rapturous frame of mind reminds one of the sainted Fletcher and a few other remarkably holy men. Of the import of the text with reference to his own final perseverance Caryosso wisely says nothing. Whatever meaning it had, if any, he never trusted to it, but invariably depended upon Christ, moment by moment. The text wrongly used might have made him a fanatical antinomian.

Shortly after his retirement from business he had a similar ravishing experience. This time he was in bed, when, he says, "I was so filled—so overpowered with the glory of God—that had there been a thousand suns shining at noonday, the brightness of that divine glory would have eclipsed the whole! . . . It was the overwhelming power of saving grace. Now it was that I again received the impress of the seal and the earnest of the Spirit in my heart. Beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, I was changed into the same image from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord. Language fails to give but a faint description of what I then experienced."

This baptism from on high was of the same nature and for the same end as the one in the field and as that in which he entered into the rest of "perfect love." In each case his enlarged conceptions of the divine love deepened his own love for Christ and thereby united him more closely and sweetly to the crucified One.

Less significant, perhaps, was his rapture a few years further on, when, while praying to be filled with the fullness of God, his soul was "drawn out in an extraordinary manner to say,

‘Fulfill, fulfill my large desires,
Large as infinity;
Give, give me all my soul requires,
All, all that is in thee.’”

Then, he adds, "Jesus spake with power, and said, 'All that I have is thine.' My soul leaped for joy, my eyes flowed with tears, and all within me shouted Glory, glory to the Lord!"

When he was seventy-seven years old he received still another of these extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit: "Such a plunge," he says, "into the ocean of God's love as I thought

exceeded all I ever before experienced. It was such a weight of glory, such an overwhelming sense of the divine presence, that I seemed lost in wonder, love, and praise. My happy spirit appeared to mingle with the glorified throng around the throne of God. It seemed to me there was but a very thin partition between me and the world of glorified spirits. I thought I could sweetly join with them in singing 'Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, . . . to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.' "

Many, but not all, saintly souls have been favored with such ecstatic states as these in the course of their lives. All do not possess that realistic type of faith which seems necessary to such forms of manifestation, though all, doubtless, may obtain, in some mode or other, as much of these occasional rapturous visitations as their idiosyncrasies permit and their needs require. We say *occasional*, because the human structure could not endure the constant strain of such billows of feeling. But where these uncommon dis-

plays of God's love are needed to lead his workmen forward and to keep them successful, God gives them. In Carvosso's case they were as reservoirs of power from which he drew the freshness and vigor which characterized his career. He seems to have been conscious of this when, favored at another time with a special visitation, he wrote the following suggestive passage. He was then at Mullion, where "religion had been at a low ebb for some years." Here are his words:

"Oppressed with grief on account of the state of things around me, I began to cry mightily unto the Lord for help. The third night, while in bed, it pleased God to reveal himself to me in a wonderful manner. From this gracious visitation my faith and hope revived; a divine power descended into my soul, and I felt like one made all anew. I knew the change was of God because of the power which was now given me to speak to the people about their souls."

This simple statement reminds one of the remarks of quaint old Thomas Watson, where he

observes, "Praying Christians have much intercourse with God, and none are so like to have the secrets of his love imparted as those who hold correspondence with him. By a close walking with God we get those bunches of grapes by the way which are an earnest of future happiness." Carvosso's sweet experience at Mullion may aptly enough be called a "bunch of grapes," but it was given him after three days of mighty prayer, and that not for himself, but for the Church and people of the place. And the end for which it was given, as recognized in his record, was not that he might luxuriate on its incomparable sweetness, but that it might nourish that spiritual enthusiasm which was the leaven of his life. He knew this fresh manifestation of God to his consciousness was genuine, because of the increase of his power to speak to the people which followed it.

It should here be noted that Carvosso's faith in Scripture truth did not rest on his knowledge of the evidences of Christianity. In all probability he had never examined them; but the basis

of his faith was his actual knowledge of God obtained through his experience. He believed in the love of God toward himself and the world because he "knew it by this inward experience." And that his faith might not fail nor his power to speak to men concerning their souls be weakened, he was favored with these occasional extraordinary baptisms of the Spirit. After them he could say with the Psalmist, "Thou hast enlarged my heart, and I will run in the way of thy commandments."

Biographies of saintly men and women are apt to produce false impressions, because they record only exceptional states of mind. Days that were barren of remarkable joys, or in which there were no specially noticeable struggles, are left blank. The reader may either fill these blanks from his own imagination or he may accept recorded experiences as types of the unmentioned days. In either case, unless he carefully weigh the record in the balances of a judgment enlightened by much observation of human lives, he is apt to be misled. Usually he overrates the hap-

piness of the saint's life, and in his attempts to emulate it meets with sore discouragement, because he struggles after the unattainable. If, for instance, he should accept the rapturous frames above described as typical of Carvosso's everyday experience, and should seek to bring his own daily life up to that standard, he would be sure to reap disappointment if not downright despair. Carvosso records but five or six such days or nights of rapture in sixty years.

Nevertheless, a careful examination of his narrative begets a conviction that his habitual experience was uncommonly rich and sweet. His temperament was nervous, his temper cheerful, his animal spirits abundant, and his physical system strong and generally healthful. Hence he was less subject to extremes of feeling than many. He could soar high without sinking correspondingly low. He could maintain himself at a more than medium height of religious emotion. Hence we find such entries as are contained in the next chapter running all through his diary.



Chapter XIII.

CARVOSSO'S ORDINARY SPIRITUAL STATE.

WHEN sixty-eight, Carvosso writes on the 7th of May: "On this day forty-seven years ago the Lord pardoned all my sins. . . . The last year has been the best of the whole. I do find that the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. I may now say with Bunyan, I have got into that land where the sun shines night and day. I thank thee, O my God, for this heaven, this element of love and joy in which my soul now lives."

A year later he exclaims: "Oh what sweet communion have I this night had with my blessed Jesus. . . . At these refreshing seasons

how easy it is to plunge into the fountain that cleanses from all sin!"

Two days after he writes: "This morning the Lord shined into my heart . . . and gave me to see what is implied in the believer's being an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ. Such was my faith, I could easily claim all that God hath in earth and heaven as my own. I clearly discover it is by these believing views that the soul is changed from glory into glory,—

'Till in heaven we take our place;
Till we cast our crowns before him,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.'"

Again, in his seventieth year we find him thus writing:

"Though I am all weakness, ignorance, helplessness, and unworthiness, yet I have the testimony of my own conscience and the witness of the Spirit that I am wholly, unreservedly his; his in body, spirit, soul; for Christ is in my heart, I dwell in God, and God in me.

" . . . While meditating on the words,
Who shall separate us from the love of Christ,

etc., what an increase of faith did I feel. . . . This morning God filled my soul with peace and joy in believing."

During the next year he writes: "I have had a fresh plunge into the fountain which is opened for sin and uncleanness. My Savior has not only washed my hands and my feet, but my head and my heart, and he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness. Oh, I can not describe what I have felt; language fails to express it."

" . . . In the past night I had many sweet moments meditating on this delightful verse,

'Thy name, O God, upon my bed,
Dwells on my lips and fires my thought;
With trembling awe, in midnight shade,
I muse on all thy hands have wrought.'

I felt I could easily die, and that to die would be gain. It was not ecstasy, not rapture, but a secret stillness, an inward heaven, the love of God filling the whole soul."

When seventy-two he wrote: "From the ground of my heart I can say Christ was never

so near, so dear, so sweet, so precious to my soul as he has been of late, and is at the present moment. My soul is in its element when I am thinking and talking about Jesus."

" . . . I awoke early this morning, and found my mind solemnly engaged with God. Not a cloud appeared, and my soul longed to take her flight to be forever with the Lord."

" . . . All is calm and joy and peace, nothing of rapture, but solid unutterable bliss."

" . . . The Lord keeps my soul like a watered garden, as a spring shut up to all but himself. How sweet the moments I have enjoyed with my God this night. His love has been in my soul as a well of living water.

‘My hope is full (O glorious hope!)
Of immortality.’”

The infirmities of age began to attack his well-knit frame as he advanced toward fourscore, but did not destroy his joys. He says: "I have restless nights, and often violent pain and much heat in my feet; but while I lie awake, I bless

God I do not suffer from the lashes of a guilty conscience. No; glory be to God, I can say:

‘Jesus, my all in all thou art,
My rest in toil, my ease in pain;
The medicine of my broken heart,
In war my peace; in loss my gain;
My smile beneath the tyrant’s frown,
In shame my glory and my crown.’

“ . . . I bless the Lord he is still deepening and widening his good work in my soul. In all my pilgrimage I never saw so much included in the word believing as I do now. I clearly perceive that were I for a moment to cease believing I should at once be swallowed up by the enemy of my soul. . . . I find no way to conquer but through faith in his blood.”

“ . . . Last night, in the midst of much pain, the Lord wonderfully supported me by his presence. Oh how sweet was that union which I had with the father, the Son, and Spirit!”

“ . . . This morning at the dawn of day I renewed my covenant with God. . . . Three times God spake with power to my soul.

In such a wonderful manner did he speak the third time that had he not veiled his glory in a moment, I could not have lived under it. I cried out, Lord, it is enough. I was then enabled to believe from my heart that my Maker had again renewed his marriage covenant with me. Oh what an increase of confidence in him did I feel after this, and what fresh vigor of soul to pursue my way to the realms of bliss and glory."

" . . . The more I meditate on divine things the more my soul is lost in the immensity of redeeming love. . . . At this time my soul is encompassed with mercy and full of the hope of immortality. To the praise and honor of his grace I can say with good Lady Maxwell, 'My evidence for sanctification is as strong as a cable fixed to an immovable rock, and as bright as the sun at noonday.'"

Thus the record of his spiritual life runs on to the close of his earthly career. In one of his latest entries he says: "In the last two or three days I have felt my soul particularly engaged

with the Lord. . . . Last night while lying on my pillow this portion of God's most holy Word flowed sweetly into my mind: 'If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' Such a divine influence accompanied these words that I was enabled to believe that the glorious truth contained in them was fulfilled in me. Indeed, I had such a confirmation of the truth and reality contained in these words: 'We will come unto him and make our abode with him,' as I never felt before."

These extracts abundantly prove that Carvosso's freshness and strength as a class-leader and soul-winner had its source in a personal experience which was habitually deep, progressive, and happy. He lived every day in very close intimacy with God. He drank constantly and freely from the wells of salvation. His faith was strong and generally triumphant. Hence, when he appeared in class or prayer-meeting he was not as one repeating what he had heard or read, but as a traveler who had just seen and felt the

glorious things of which he spake. He had recently explored the inmost recesses of the "green pastures," had enjoyed heavenly communion beside the "still waters," and therefore when he spoke, "God moved on his heart; the fire kindled within him." Then his eyes grew radiant with heavenly light, his tongue uttered wise words made eloquent by warm, joyous, tender emotion. His hearers were moved. They saw that he was prepared to guide them upwards by paths unknown to them, but familiar to him; to teach them experiences greater, richer, sweeter than their own. Viewed in the light of his rare spiritual attainments, his long-continued freshness and success, though remarkable, are not inexplicable. His springs were in God, and were, therefore, inexhaustible. It would be a strange thing, indeed, if a man with such a measure and type of spirituality had become like the dry fleece of Gideon, or had failed to continue the center of attraction to spiritual and inquiring minds so long as he was able to work.



Chapter XIV.

CARVOSSO'S TEMPTATIONS.

WE should, however, seriously mislead and greatly injure the reader if we led him to believe that Carvosso never had any but joyful days; that his sun was uniformly unclouded, and that his inner life was a calm, quiet sea, unruffled by the wind of temptation or by natural activities in the direction of sin. It is impossible, we think, to question, with sound reason, either the sincerity or reality of his profession of "perfect love;" neither can one avoid the conclusion that most of his days were spent very happily, even joyously. Nevertheless, as we shall see, his faith was frequently assailed fiercely by the tempter, and though it seems highly probable that he lived over sixty years

without contracting conscious guilt, yet, as shown by his own honest confessions, there were tendencies even in his sanctified nature, which, but for his constant watchfulness, prayer, and faith in the cleansing blood, would have led him into sin. Carvosso enjoyed and professed "perfect love," but he neither professed nor possessed *sinless* perfection. There is, in truth, no such thing as *absolute* sinlessness possible to men while here on earth; for, as Wesley truly says, "the highest perfection which man can attain while the soul dwells in the body does not exclude ignorance and error and a thousand other infirmities, . . . and in numberless instances it comes short of doing the will of God as Adam did in Paradise. Hence the best of men may say from the heart,

‘Every moment, Lord, I need
The merit of thy death.’”

This judicious putting of the question is in harmony with our class-leader's experience. We have seen how free Christ kept his soul from *guilt*, but we have not found any such declaration as

“I have not committed a sin these —— years.” On the contrary, we shall now find confessions of shortcomings, desires, and infirmities which, but for his constant washings in the sacred fountain of our adorable Lord’s most precious blood, would have stained his conscience and led to conscious transgression. The following passage, written some forty-five years after he was first made perfect in love, appears to express the results of a calm review of his experience. Let the serious reader ponder it carefully :

“Oh how precious is the Word of God to my soul! especially the promises of full salvation, the truth of which I have happily experienced for years. . . . Not all the powers of darkness have been able to baffle me out of the reality and truth of this glorious doctrine. It does really appear to me that it would be one of my greatest sins to deny this work of the Spirit of God in my soul. *I do not mean to say that I have not often, by my unfaithfulness, grieved the Spirit of God since I first obtained the great blessing of a clean heart, but when my garment has been spotted by*

sin I have remembered that I have an Advocate with the Father, and through his prevalent intercession and the efficacy of that open fountain, which washes whiter than snow, I have felt my soul mercifully restored to the joys of full salvation."

Upon this significant extract his son and biographer comments as follows:

"The subject of this memoir generally lived in the Spirit throughout his long pilgrimage; yet he needed an Advocate and an open fountain. It was only by the blood of Jesus he could daily enter the holiest place. He did enter with humble boldness, but it was by simple faith in the blood which cleanses from all sin. Indeed, I never knew any man who expressed such an abiding conviction of the necessity of Christ's continued intercession."

All this is both Wesleyan and Scriptural. It agrees, too, with the experience of all really saintly men. Perhaps few things have hindered multitudes of humble Christians from seeking the blessedness of a perfect love for Christ more than such a presentation of it by some of its over-

zealous confessors as has concealed such concessions as those made by Carvosso. When unintentionally made to appear as the equivalent of absolute sinlessness, modest Christians, conscious of their own weakness and aware of the faultiness of the best representatives of poor human nature, have shrunk from "perfect love" as an unattainable height. Hence, as if rebuking such injudicious confessors, Carvosso says:

"I find by conversing with professors, that many who truly desire this inestimable privilege are prevented from laying hold of it by setting it too high. It is nothing more or less than simply loving God with all the heart. Blessed be God, I do enjoy this great salvation!"

Loving God with all the heart! That is, indeed, the kernel of the doctrine of "perfect love" as held by our Church. He who thus loves God may indeed fall short of the strict requirements of the law made for human nature in the perfection of its powers, but he can not willfully and consciously offend his beloved Lord; and therefore, through the merit of the all-cleansing blood,

his deficiencies and infirmities are not imputed to him as sins. Nevertheless, his love for Christ impels him to mourn over them and struggle with all the might of faith and manhood to overcome them.

An interesting example of the struggle between "perfect love" and a painful human duty is given in Carvosso's narrative. His younger son had felt himself called to enter the foreign missionary field. Carvosso loved him very tenderly. In addition to the natural tie was the spiritual one formed by his being the instrument of his son's conversion. His heart shrunk from making the sacrifice. He withheld his consent, and thus for some time kept the intending missionary from entering upon what was, in those days, a tedious and dangerous enterprise. Still he was uneasy. He prayed much and often about it. One day, while on his knees, the divine presence seemed to surround him suddenly, and a voice said to his heart, "I gave my Son to die for thee, and canst thou not give thy son to go an errand for me? I will bring him to thee again."

This appeal of the divine to the human love

was sufficient. Instantly, he writes, "I cried out, 'Take him, Lord, take him!'" He adds: "The Lord conquered me by his dying love, and never did I offer any thing to God more willingly. Indeed, it appeared to me at that time that if I had a thousand sons I would cheerfully have given all up to God for such a work. Nor have I since had one uneasy thought about him."

One would be inclined to think that a "perfect love" would not have hesitated at all to give up a son to missionary work. But, on reflection, one sees that at first Carvosso looked at the sacrifice from its human side only. But when the Holy Spirit showed him its divine side, his love, thus impressively enlightened, instantly, and without the least reservation, made the required surrender. His son remarks that subsequently to this heavenly visitation his father, like a Spartan mother, dreaded, not his going, but his possible failure to do his highest duty.

The frank simplicity of Carvosso's nature led him to set down the sources of his occasional mental struggles just as he saw and felt them.

He kept nothing back through fear of injuring the doctrine of "perfect love" in the estimation of casuists. Knowing it to be true, as qualified by Wesley, he had no fear that it could be harmed by a faithful delineation of every thing connected with its experience. And he knew further, that to conceal its struggles and to describe only its joyful side would be misleading to those who sought it, and would, in the end, retard its spread in the Church. It may encourage some to persevere, who have become discouraged because their experience has fallen below their conceptions, if we make the dark side of this holy man's inner life a subject of further observation and study. On one occasion we hear him saying:

"This day, while mourning in secret for my *unfaithfulness*, and pouring out my soul for a fresh manifestation, Jesus spake to me, saying, 'Reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing.' Instantly my mourning was turned into joy, and Christ again became precious."

Eight days later he complains, saying: "The

greatest thing I have had of late to contend with is *vain thoughts*. I feel I have need to pray that God would not suffer them to lodge within me. If not promptly resisted these become the little foxes that spoil the vine."

A few months further on he writes that some days before one of his most delightful seasons, his "faith was sorely tried, and not without a cause. Oh what *necessity there is for self-denial!* Lord, keep me ever watching."

A month later he says: "I see if I would get good every-where it must be by striving to keep my *outward senses under subjection* to those which grace has opened in the soul. . . . I am desirous of learning his way more perfectly, that I may daily make sensible objects subservient to the realities which faith reveals."

Again, and within a few weeks, he writes: "I have had *severe conflicts with the powers of darkness*, but Jesus has proved my strong tower. Since the storm it has been a blessed calm, all joy, all peace."

He was seventy-two years old when he said:

“It seemed this morning as if all the powers of darkness were let loose upon me and determined to devour me, I kept continually calling upon God and casting my soul on his precious atonement. . . . No promise appeared, nor had I any sensible enjoyment—nothing but *a sight of my weakness, imperfections, shortcomings, and failings. Not that I felt condemnation for any particular act.* This was a conflict of a peculiar kind; for *thousands of times* before when I have been violently attacked by the enemy I have looked up to Jesus and found him to be a strong tower. Now, naked faith was my only defense. . . . At last I thought of our Lord led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. On this, the adversary began to yield, and in a moment Jesus appeared to my believing eyes, and spoke to me in his well-known voice, ‘To him that overcometh will I grant to sit down with me on my throne,’ etc. In an instant my enemies were all gone, and oh, how did the transcendent glories of my precious Redeemer beam forth upon my soul!”

At another time he wrote: "This morning it was suggested to my mind, — Suppose these [Scripture] promises should not come from the Spirit of God? For a moment I felt a shrinking back, through the temptation to *unbelief*. Suddenly these words were applied to my mind, 'Reach hither thy finger,' etc. In a moment the temptation was gone, and I was constrained to cry out with Thomas, 'My Lord and my God!'" It was a blessed season, and the witness of perfect love was again renewed to my soul."

Still later in life he writes: "I have often of late been attacked by *vain thoughts*. It is no little thing at all times to *conquer self*. Oh for a power continually

'To catch the wandering of my will,
And quench the kindling fire.'"

Again he says: "I have had to mourn over my *shortcomings and imperfections*. I long for every thought and desire to be continually swallowed up in God."

After more than fifty years' experience of

“perfect love” our venerable patriarch writes: “In all my life I never felt a greater need of praying to my heavenly Father that he would continually cleanse *the thoughts of my heart*. I see I must take great care, or *vain* thoughts will lodge within me. I must confess that *I have sustained loss* from this quarter. If not repelled in a moment, they are of such a *pernicious nature* that a sting is left behind; and were it not for a fresh application of the blood that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel, it would prove fatal.”

When the frosts of fourscore Winters had bleached his reverend head, he wrote: “I have lately had some sharp conflicts with myself, and with the adversary of my peace. Oh what a necessity do I find for using *self-denial*. More and more I see self must be mortified. But I have again proved by experience that it is faith, and faith alone, which brings certain victory over *self and sin*.”

These extracts represent all the varieties of temptation mentioned in his diary. By casting

his eye upon the italicised words and phrases, the reader can readily sum up the causes of Carvosso's mental struggles. His Satanic temptations and buffetings were frequent and severe, as they are in all holy souls, but they were generally of brief duration and succeeded by unusually sweet fellowship with God—the divine means of compensating such souls for their endurance of a mode of trial which seems needful for the development of their spiritual strength.

But more baffling than Satan's devices were the battles he had to fight with himself. *Vain thoughts; unbelief; the tendency of his outward senses to become doors of admission for evil conceptions; the inclination of his natural appetites to overstep the bounds of self-denial; the readiness of his regulated self-love to lapse into selfishness; and his consciousness of unfaithfulness and imperfections,* were more or less associated, from first to last, with the exercises and victories of his faith.

But, let it be remembered, these strifes though frequent were seldom lasting. The enemy scarcely

showed himself in the field before he was captured. Peace and joy gave character to his days; his temptations and battles were momentary. The entirety of his spiritual life may be compared to a calm, bright, Summer day, which has its brilliancy briefly dimmed by the passage of a few clouds, and its calm temporarily broken by sudden gusts of wind.

Again, it should be noted that the sinful tendencies of which Carvosso complains were involuntary in their action and were victoriously repressed as soon as discovered. They sprang from sources not necessarily sinful in themselves; as suppose he had generally a sharp appetite for food, which, he being a man of robust build and habit, is likely. During the last nineteen years of his life, being mostly from home the honored guest of admiring friends, and often feasted at their abundant tables, it was but too easy a thing for him to eat more than was healthful; that is, to cross unthinkingly the line of Christian self-denial. When reminded of this excess, by a feeling of undue fullness, or by heaviness, his

sensitive conscience would naturally take alarm, grieve, and spur him to fly to the all-cleansing fountain. We judge most of his self-censure arose from causes like this, inasmuch as he said, when recording one of his severest battles, "*Not that I felt condemnation for any particular act.*" His offenses, such as they were, had not the consent of his will, and therefore, though sinful if judged by the perfect law of God for an unfallen man, they were not imputed to him as sin. But dreading defilement from them, he hastened to plunge into the "purple flood" the instant he detected them in his life.

His *vain thoughts*, we judge, were temptations to self-complacency, arising out of the flattering words commonly addressed to such successful evangelists by admiring but injudicious friends. His habit of giving God all the glory of his success prevented that feeling from blooming into actual sin; nevertheless it annoyed him. His consciousness of shortcomings and imperfections was the necessary outgrowth of his continued advance in holiness. The nearer he lived to

God the keener became his perceptions of the "exceeding breadth" of the divine commandments, and his consequent ever increasing convictions of personal defect when tried by them. On this point we find him quoting the following passage, which is admirably put:

"Conviction is not condemnation. As children of God we may be convinced yet not condemned; convinced of useless thoughts and words, yet not condemned for them. We are condemned for nothing while we love God and give him all our heart!"

Carvosso adds: "These remarks are, I think, just and important. For the want of heavenly wisdom to discern between conviction and condemnation many sincere souls have been foiled by the grand adversary; they have yielded to unbelief, entered into temptation, and cast away their confidence."

This is doubtless true. It is also true that many have been beaten back from the pursuit of what our Church and the Scriptures call "perfect love" by confounding it with the impossible at-

tainment of absolute sinlessness. Having shown by our analysis of what we have called, perhaps with exaggeration, the dark side of Carvosso's generally happy experience of Scriptural holiness, we will confirm his views by citing, from a sermon by Burgess, a Wesleyan minister, a passage which our class-leader commends to the consideration of all progressive believers:

“Even when we are cleansed from all the pollution of sin,” says Burgess, “we shall be sensible of numberless frailties and deficiencies which will render it necessary for us continually to have recourse to the atoning blood of Jesus; and our best services are so imperfect and unworthy that, were they not offered in the name of Christ and on the ground of his all-availing sacrifice, they could by no means be acceptable to God. But while we live in the constant exercise of faith, embracing the whole record God has given concerning his Son, we shall have constant experience of the efficacy of the Redeemer's blood, and shall, from moment to moment, enjoy a complete salvation from sin.”

In summing up his long, and, on the whole, very delightful spiritual life, our class-leader repeats his confirmation of this writer's view of perfect love in these words:

“I would not undervalue the grace which I have already received, because nothing is more likely to hinder the soul's progress in holiness; but oh, how clearly do I see I could not stand acquitted before God one moment without the atonement! After fifty-six years spent in the service of God, I find I have nothing to keep my soul in motion but faith in the blood of Christ. Without this I should be at once as a ship becalmed. Glory be to God for precious blood and precious faith!”

What profound humility! what positive repudiation of the idea of innate, *absolute sinlessness*, in these golden sentences!

Carvosso's sharp conflicts, as well as his more habitual happiness, contributed to his success as a class-leader and soul-winner. They enabled him to say to all tempted ones, as he once wrote to an inquirer after the way of holiness, “As I

have passed through the same feelings which you describe in your letter, I know where you are and what you want. Suffer me to speak plain to you in order to set you right." It is written of Christ, our chief Leader, "In that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." Thus, like his Lord, Carvosso learned the secret of guiding bewildered souls through the valley of temptation by treading its dreary paths with his own feet. And one of the compensating uses of his spiritual suffering was that it helped qualify him to be a sure guide and safe helper to many. But for Satan's assaults and the activity of his own natural tendencies in the direction of evil, Carvosso would have been ignorant of Satan's devices and of the unseen, and sometimes bitter, conflicts of thought and feeling which are continued to the end of life in all holy souls.



Chapter XV.

CARVOSSO'S FREEDOM FROM EXTRAVAGANCES.

ONE of the most creditable facts in Carvosso's career is the absence of extravagance, fanaticism, and unhealthy enthusiasm. The gentleman who preached his funeral sermon really pronounced a very high compliment to his good sense when he said: "The wildness of speech and action which some good people have fallen into, in him stood reprobated." When we consider Carvosso's illiteracy, the very humble associations of his life for over threescore years, and then his celebrity as a Christian worker during the nineteen years which preceded his death, it is a positive marvel that he did not fall into some of the many extrav-

agances which have circumscribed the usefulness of some workers of high spiritual pretensions. There is no doubt that he owed much of his healthy conservatism to that native common sense which made him so thrifty a yeoman at St. Gluvias. This was also the fountain from whence flowed the "sound speech which could not be condemned even by those of the contrary part, and which was the common dress of his thoughts concerning the kingdom within him." But still more must it be attributed to the fact also mentioned by Mr. Lawry at his funeral, that "*he was remarkably Scriptural*. It was evident he was no more spoiled by vain philosophy than he was the captive of wild enthusiasm. The record which God had given him concerning his Son he believed with all his heart, and to him it was the only and sufficient rule."

In nothing, perhaps, was this more manifest than in his manner of treating the question of "perfect love." Instead of foolishly striving to exalt the theory of entire sanctification by depreciating the value of the precious blessings of

justification and regeneration, as, unhappily, the manner of some is; instead of dealing out unstinted denunciation of all who did not profess to be pure in heart, he strove most lovingly and sweetly to lead his Christian brethren forward to perfect love as to a desirable, inestimable privilege. In this he was acting in harmony with the advice of Wesley and his fellow laborers as given in the Conference of 1747. That body in answer to the question, Does not the harsh preaching of perfection tend to bring believers into a kind of bondage or slavish fear? said:

“It does. Therefore we should always place it in the most amiable light, so that it may excite only hope, joy, and desire.”

Of the manner of preaching sanctification they said: “It should be done always by promise; always by drawing, rather than driving.”

Again, the Conference declared “that to teach believers to be continually poring upon their inbred sin is the ready way to make them forget that they are purged from their former sins, . . . or to make them undervalue and ac-

count it a little thing. Whereas, indeed, though there are still greater gifts behind, this [regeneration] is inexpressibly great and glorious."

Wesley cautioned professors of this experience to "beware of censoriousness, thinking or calling those who oppose you, whether in judgment or practice, blind, dead, fallen, or enemies of the work. . . . Beware of crying nothing but Believe, believe, believe, and condemning those as ignorant or legal who speak in a more spiritual way."

It was in the spirit of these eminently wise counsels that Carvosso constantly presented this interesting question to his brethren in Christ. Hence we find him saying, of four friends who came together to talk of the deep things of God, "after I had pointed out to them their *privilege* to be pure in heart and the way to attain it we went to prayer, and the Lord opened the windows of heaven, and poured out such a blessing that there was scarcely room to contain it. It was some time before any thing could be uttered but Glory, glory, glory! From that time

they all bore witness that the 'blood of Jesus Christ had cleansed them from all sin.'"

Again, speaking of his visits to the classes at Camborne, he writes: "I strove earnestly to show leaders and people the necessity of being cleansed from all sin and of pressing into full salvation; and I have the happiness of seeing many lay hold on Christ as their perfect Savior."

In another place he describes himself looking back as from an eminence, upon his past opportunities for observation in the Church of Christ. He sums up the results of his review thus:

"In meeting classes and in private conversation, during the fifty years of my pilgrimage, and more particularly within the last eight years, I have gained considerable knowledge of professors, and must express *my grief* that the number of the half-hearted is so large. Alas! what multitudes are at ease in Zion. . . . Neither hot nor cold."

Here we perceive no symptom of a censorious spirit, only of the deep sorrow of a man regretting an evil, the reality of which is too

obvious to be overlooked by a thoughtful observer. Now mark the divine charity which guides his pen as he proceeds to account for the painful fact.

“Were the mystery of faith better known, the improvement among God’s people would be much more rapid. Men are not defective in their sincerity, but in their faith. It is simply because of unbelief that they do not enter into the glorious rest which is before them and nigh unto them. They do not see it is their privilege to venture now on Christ for the blessing they want—whether justification or sanctification. Oh that the blessed Spirit would help the infirmities of the children of the kingdom, and give them to see their privileges and the way to possess them!”

Equally Scriptural with this sublimely charitable mode of pressing the privilege was his dealing with the question of the profession of perfect love. Unquestionably he believed that it was eminently proper, under suitable circumstances, for the subjects of this delightful “higher life”

to profess it. He did so himself in private conversation with earnest Christians, in class-meetings, and in love-feasts. Possibly he did so occasionally in prayer-meetings, made up chiefly of believers, though we have not found any instance of his doing so in his memoir. But we nowhere find him teaching that its open, public confession is a necessary condition of its retention. He was too "remarkably Scriptural" to make any such utterance. He knew it was a Christian duty openly to "confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus;" he had learned from John that "whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God; God dwelleth in him and he in God." Hence he knew that no man or woman who, from fear or shame, refused to make such an open personal profession of faith in Christ could continue to be a disciple of Christ. But he had not learned from either John or Paul or Jesus, that any individual was under obligation publicly to confess the precise degree of his intimacy with his Lord on pain of forfeiting either his love, faith, or discipleship. And because he had not

learned this strange doctrine in Holy Writ, Carvosso did not teach it. Certainly we find no such teaching in his memoir. He was too submissive to Holy Writ and to Wesleyan teaching* to presume on setting up a standard not clearly found in the sacred page.

And yet, as we have said, this good man believed in the fitness of making suitable profession of entire sanctification. Wisely, however, he left the question where Scripture leaves it, with the consciences and judgments of the subjects of the blessing, knowing that with most the impulses and needs of their blessed life would move them to confess all Jesus had done for them, either in the fellowship of the class-meeting or in more private conversation with pastor, leader, or intimate friend. His observations on human nature

* The view of intelligent Methodists respecting the profession of entire sanctification was never better expressed than by the Wesleyan Conference of 1747. To the question, "Would you advise him who possesses it to speak of it?" it was replied: "Not to them who know not God; it would only provoke them to contradict and blaspheme; *not to any without some particular reason—without some particular good in view*; and then they should have an especial care to avoid all appearance of boasting, and to speak more loudly and convincingly by their lives than they can do by their tongues."

must also have taught him that on a point unsettled by a positive command, no rule, applicable alike to all temperaments, could judiciously be insisted on. Some are so constituted that they can speak of their most sacred intimacies with God without hesitation before multitudes; others shrink from unveiling to any human eye what takes place in secret between their souls and the great All-Father. And these ought not to be censured in the Church. They have Wesley for their exemplar, for, as Bradburn wrote, "Wesley's modesty prevented him saying much concerning his religious feelings. In public, he hardly ever spoke of the state of his own soul; but in 1781 he told me that his experience might almost at any time be expressed in the following lines :

" 'O thou who camest from above,
 The pure celestial fire to' impart,
 Kindle a flame of sacred love
 On the mean altar of my heart!

There let it for thy glory burn
 With inextinguishable blaze,
 And trembling to its source return
 In humble love and fervent praise.' "

Yet no man can reasonably doubt that Wesley's love for God was supreme. His life was a grand attestation of the greatness of his love. And it is ever so. A heart full of love divine has little need of the tongue to declare the fullness of its affection. Its fruits will publish it abroad. The *holy life* is always married to the holy heart. While, therefore, it may be proper to encourage those who have tasted the powers of the higher life, not to cast the sacred pearl before swine, but to speak freely to such fellow believers as possess their confidence or whom they desire to lead into a like blissful experience, it is far better to do as Carvosso did—persuade as many as possible to make sure of its possession. That main point secured, its profession in some form and to some persons will be sure to follow. But nothing hinders men from seeking perfect love more than an excess of its profession accompanied with a deficiency of its practice. In this age of ethical weakness, nothing is more needed than more perfect love illustrated in lives of practical holiness.

The intensity of Carvosso's spiritual conceptions led him in one particular at least pretty close to the border land of fanaticism. He fancied, if indeed he did not firmly believe, that it was possible for mortals to hear heavenly music. In fact, he thought he had once heard it himself. It seems that when he was about twenty-eight years old a pious girl died in his neighborhood exclaiming, "They are come, they are come!" "At the same instant," wrote Carvosso, who was working in a field near by, "I heard the most delightful singing in the air I ever heard in my life!"

He recorded this impression fifty years later, in connection with a letter from one of his Mousehole friends informing him that a pious old man had confidently asserted that one evening, while worshiping in the chapel, he heard supernatural music of the most melodious kind proceeding, as he thought, from that part of the leader's pew which had long been occupied by two recently deceased brethren of very extraordinary piety. Carvosso accepted this story as

credible. He defended it by citing those Scriptures which speak of angelic joy and of the angel's singing to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem!

We can readily conceive of dying saints having their spiritual faculties so far set free from the bondage of the bodies they are leaving as to catch glimpses and hear voices of the world they are just entering. We can also conceive that Carvosso, aware that a good girl was dying within a few feet of where he stood, permitted his imagination to so picture her entrance into the glorious land as to produce an impression on his senses that he actually heard the music which, as he believed, greeted the soul of the dying girl. In like manner we can readily understand how the pious old man's imagination of heavenly music at Mousehole was projected outward upon his sense of hearing while he was intensely thinking of the departed leaders whom he had so often seen in the official pew. But we can not conceive of disembodied spirits making themselves heard by the physical organs of living

men, except by miracles, as in the cases of angels sent on divine missions to mortals. Carvosso was certainly fanciful in this belief, which, but for his unfailing common sense, might have led him into extravagancies less harmful than this.

We discern this tendency of his strong but, on the whole, well-governed imagination in a few other notes of his spiritual exercises. He wrote, for example, that, while thinking of his Mouse-hole friends after a period of glorious revival: "I seemed to be carried away till I was found among you with Jesus in the midst of us."

Again, he says: "While I lay awake last night my mind was suddenly impressed, as if a voice had spoken to me, that it was my privilege to converse with God. I cried out, 'What, such a worm—an unworthy worm—as I am converse with God! The thought caused my heart to leap for joy, while new scenes of glory shone around me.'"

He also claimed that he could so commune with absent friends as sometimes to be aware of their depression or gladness. After the return

of his son from his mission work in New South Wales, he said to a group of friends:

“Ever since my son left me, my spirit has been daily as familiar with his at a throne of grace as if he had been always in the same room with me.”

Speaking of frequent rumors that the ship in which his son had embarked was lost at sea, he said to him after his return home:

“One day in my closet, when pouring out my soul to the God of heaven that he would preserve and bring you safe to land, he answered me and said: ‘They are got safe there already.’ I knew his voice and believed it; yes, I as much believed what God told me as if I saw you landed. I informed your sister of it, and took care to mark the day. It was the 30th of April, 1820, and on reference to your journal I see you landed on the 25th.”

Doubtless there are many unsolved psychological mysteries respecting the intercourse of mind with mind, and it may be that Carvosso’s alleged communion with his son and his spiritual friends was one of them. So also it is possible

that the Almighty spoke the words quoted above in answer to this good man's prayer. Nevertheless, both these claims are so analogous to his belief in the heavenly music and his idea of personal conversation with the Divine One, that we prefer to class both with the few other fancies of his devout mind which show that at times the intensity of his feelings bore him quite as far toward the door which leads to fanaticism as was either safe or healthful. Had he gone a step or two farther, he might have asserted that he was actually present with Jesus in Mousehole; and that he really held personal conversation with the Almighty. Then he would have been a fanatic indeed, and his grand life would have been spoiled. Happily, as remarked above, his good sense and his respect for Holy Writ kept him from going far astray. Nevertheless, he went sufficiently near to the line of danger to suggest to the spiritually minded that it is needful, even in divine things, to keep the curb of common sense and calm judgment both on the imagination and the emotions.



Chapter XVI.

CARVOSSO AND THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT TO PERFECT LOVE.

DOES the Holy Spirit bear the same direct testimony to the soul's entire sanctification as he does to one's adoption?

We find Carvosso writing as if he held an opinion respecting this important question which has been a source of much injurious fanaticism. For instance, speaking of one of his deliverances from a fierce temptation and the joy which succeeded, he says:

“It was a blessed season, and the witness of perfect love was again renewed to my soul. This blessed witness of the Spirit, both in justification and sanctification, is what I see the necessity of more than ever. For my own part I do

not see what progress professors of religion can make without this. Did I say religion? Can they be deemed the possessors of true religion at all till they so believe as to have the witness in themselves? Till they have this Gospel faith they can only be denominated seekers of salvation."

Again, we find him writing to a lady who was seeking "perfect love:"

" . . . We must continue to believe every moment in order to feel. I wish you were as anxious in your mind about believing as you are about feeling. Then I am sure God would send the witness of the Spirit into your heart, and enable you to say:

" 'T is done; thou dost this moment save;
With full salvation bless;
Redemption through thy blood I have,
And spotless love and peace.'

" . . . You need the wisdom which shows the difference between the witness of the Spirit and the simple act of faith. . . . The witness of the Spirit is God's gift, not our act;

but it is given to all who act faith on Jesus and the promise made by him."

The logical conclusion to be drawn from these citations is, that Carvosso held and taught that the Holy Spirit bears as *direct* and positive witness to a believer's entire sanctification as he does to his adoption. If so, he certainly taught a theory which has no warrant in Scripture. But we are in doubt whether he intended to be so understood; whether he meant more than that in sanctification the Holy Spirit impresses the fact of the entirety of one's love to God so deeply upon the consciousness as to become the *indirect* witness to its existence. We think this was his real opinion, often obscurely stated however, for the following reasons:

First, At the close of the letter just cited, in telling how he gained the blessing of a clean heart, he says: "All this [prayer, desire, etc.,] would not do till I believed that Christ had paid all for me: then I felt the refining fire go through my heart, and all within me became wholly sanctified to God."

Here his own experience is related to illustrate the doctrine; but his own consciousness of the *work* of the Spirit, the source of the refining fire, not his *direct* witness, is the evidence which satisfied him that he was "wholly sanctified to God."

Again, describing the joyful result of a visit, paid him by two persons from Falmouth to converse on the subject of full salvation, he cites with approval the following passage: "When Jesus is our peace, strength, righteousness, food, salvation, and our all, *we are penetrated with the consciousness of it*; without this feeling we should never rest, nor even think we have it strong enough; this it is to keep the faith."

This is sound doctrine; but it is not consistent with his apparent meaning in the previous citations. Must it not be accepted as qualifying them?

We think so, because at another time, after telling us that he feels "a fresh resolution . . . to urge on others the great necessity of their receiving and retaining the witness of the Spirit," he adds: "*What I mean* by the witness of the

Spirit, Mr. Wesley very clearly explains in his excellent sermon on the subject. 'The testimony of the Spirit,' says he, 'is an inward impression on the soul whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God, that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me; that all my sins are blotted out; and that I, even I, am a child of God.'"

This explicit avowal of what Carvosso understood by the witness of the Spirit must, we think, qualify the phrase wherever he uses it. That he should sometimes employ it inconsistently with this and the preceding citation, need not surprise us. He was neither a theologian nor a cultivated thinker. The marvel is, not that he should use a phrase loosely or hold an idea obscurely in a few instances, but that he should on the whole see so clearly and write so correctly as he generally does. For our part we prefer to think Carvosso obscure on this point, to believing that he was radically unsound, as he would have been had he believed that "the Spirit of God *directly* witnesses" to the entire sancti-

fication of any man, or indeed to any other *fact* in Christian experience than "that we are the children of God."

To the fact of the soul's pardon the *direct* witness of the Holy Spirit is needed as to no other in its experience, because, as Richard Watson very clearly remarks, "Our own spirits can take no cognizance of the mind of God, as to our actual pardon, and can bear no witness to that fact. The Holy Spirit only, who knows the mind of God, can be this witness; and if the fact that God is reconciled to us can only be known to him, by him only can it be attested to us." But the fact of the soul's perfection in love is of an entirely different nature. Though accomplished by the operation of the Holy Spirit it is nevertheless a fact to which the *consciousness of the possessor* testifies, and there is no need that the Divine Witness should attest it *as he does God's act of pardon*. And it is, doubtless, for this reason that Holy Scripture *nowhere asserts* that the Spirit of God beareth witness with our spirit that we are wholly sanctified. To quote Dr. Whedon

in his note on Romans viii, 16: "The Spirit testifies solely to this one fact, our being children of God. This special testimony can not be quoted for other facts than our sonship."

There is no question that when a believer receives that baptism of divine love which makes his own love perfect, the Holy Spirit impresses the fact of his sonship with renewed and extraordinary power upon his consciousness. It must never be forgotten that sonship carries with it heirship to every thing implied in redemption, including personal holiness and glorification in heaven. "If children then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Now it is the knowledge of our sonship which begets our love to God in regeneration, and that love is the root of all our personal holiness. As Wesley well says, "Love is the sum of perfection." Hence, when a believer rises by study of the Word and by prayer to a full perception of the privileges involved in sonship, and strives to enter into possession of them by faith,

the Spirit assists his faith by illuminating his understanding and by causing the fact of the divine Fatherhood intensely to penetrate his consciousness. He thereby influences his will, and stimulates his affections so that they become entirely surrendered to God. These operations of the Holy One are finely, sweetly expressed by Charles Wesley in these lines:

“Send us the spirit of thy Son,
To make the depths of Godhead known,
To make us share the life divine;
Send him the sprinkled blood to apply,
Send him our souls to sanctify,
And show and seal us ever thine.”

Show and seal us ever thine! To this every true believer will heartily respond, Amen! But showing and sealing are not bearing witness in the sense of Paul when speaking of the witness of adoption. He shows and seals us by shedding the love of God abroad so abundantly in the heart that we become profoundly conscious, not only of God's precious love for us, but also of our own “perfect love” for him.


But why object to Carvosso's calling this work

of the Spirit the witness to sanctification? For two reasons: First, except as qualified above, it is not Scriptural. In the second place it tends to the encouragement of fanaticism. In no mean sense the Spirit's witness to our adoption is a revelation, making known to the individual on earth an act of the divine mind. The Scriptures limit the Spirit's revelations in believers generally to that single fact. In claiming a similar revelation for a question knowable by consciousness, the limitation of Scripture is broken down and a door opened for any enthusiast to claim that other facts are revealed to him. And why not, if there be no fixed limit? Hence we have had sundry fanaticisms—such, for instance, as the coming of Christ in 1843—supported by the plea that their propagandists had received the witness of the Spirit that their fanciful notions were truths. For these and other reasons, while admitting the doctrine of an indirect witness, we object to Carvosso's claim of the direct witness of the Spirit in sanctification, except as qualified by his citation from the writings of our cautious founder.



Chapter XVII.

INCIDENTAL SOURCES OF CARVOSSO'S SUCCESS.

 HERE is a homely but expressive proverb in the writings of "The Preacher" which, if it did not serve as a direct guide to Carvosso, was certainly illustrated very remarkably throughout his long career of usefulness. Every active Christian will do well to note it carefully. Here it is:

"Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savor; so doth *a little folly* him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor." (Ecclesiastes x, 1.)

Among the minor follies, the "dead flies," which neutralize religious labors by imparting an unsavory odor to the Christian character

of many class-leaders, and may we not add other Christian workers and preachers? is their habit of jesting and trifling in ordinary conversation. It may be possible to reconcile solemnity in meeting with lightness elsewhere. Within certain limits, we suppose it is; for every bow must be unbent at times. But it does look very contradictory to a serious soul when a leader or other worker who has been striving with tearful earnestness to impress him with sacred and eternal things acts and talks with the frivolity of a worldling. "If that man," he reasons, "really believed what he said a little while since he would not trifle as he is doing now." This may be incorrect reasoning, but it disturbs his confidence in Christian men, and thereby strengthens the unbelief which makes him at enmity with the cross. Unquestionably very many souls have wounded themselves to eternal death with the jests of unguarded Christians.

Carvosso never permitted such mischief-working words to escape his lips. He never trifled, though he was always cheerful. Indeed, his piety, as we have seen, was not of a morose, sour, or

severe type. On the contrary, it was smiling, cheerful, and even joyous; but his joy never degenerated into that idle mirthfulness which is as "the crackling of thorns under a pot." For idle laughter he had neither disposition nor time. His heart was too full of Jesus and of plans to save souls to leave space for that desire to find the ludicrous side of men and things which gives birth to jests and witticisms. He looked constantly on the eternal relations of every human being within the circle of his activity, and this habitual outlook gave tone and color to all his conversation. Hence we find such remarks as the following dropping incontinently from his pen.

He is at Devonport, and is taken by his host to visit a common friend. Whereupon he says: "Several persons were in the room when I entered, and I began at once *conversing with them about their souls.*"

This conversation was not formal, but earnest, as we learn when we are told that, finding one of the party to be "a stranger to the things of God," he solemnly pressed her to give her heart

to God and to promise him that "she would that night begin to pray." The lady hesitated. He was persistent. "God is present," he urged, "and sees the thoughts of your heart and that I am waiting for your answer."

His words reach her conscience and alarm her fears. "What is the use," she cries, "for me to promise? I have already made promises, but have broken them all."

He now perceives that this lady has been the subject of previous gracious influences, and is encouraged to push the battle to the gate. "Your promises," he says affectionately, "have been made in your own strength. I want you to promise in the strength of the Lord."

This simple shaft struck home. The lady instantly responded: "Sir, will you pray with me now?"

Gladly he kneeled and pleaded in her behalf. She did not find peace then, but her purpose was fixed. Carvosso left; and she sought a secret spot, and offered herself to God. For reasons unknown to us she was slow to believe, but she

was resolute, and after twenty-one days of penitential sorrow, "she was enabled to rejoice in a sin-pardoning God."

If Carvosso had been a wit in conversation, or a retailer of frivolous gossip to that party of friends, would that lady have been given to him as his spiritual child?

Again we find this devoted man in the house of a brother class-leader at Mabe. He is there by urgent invitation for the purpose of meeting his friend's class in the evening. His host and hostess are earnest Christians, but their four servants are "living without God in the world." Instead of passing the interval between his arrival and the meeting hour in friendly chitchat, as most men would have done without compunction, Carvosso's thoughts were so turned toward the ungodly servants that he began to feel "much compassion for them and a longing desire to do them good." This desire soon flowed into action. Having learned that one of the servants had once known something of divine grace, he sought him out, held a long conversation with

him, and finally extorted a promise that he would go to class-meeting that evening.

The man failed to keep his promise. But Carvosso, instead of giving him up, sought him the next morning, and bluntly asked:

“Why did you skulk away last evening instead of keeping your promise?”

The man quailed under his questioner’s searching eye, and was speechless. Carvosso then “reproved him smartly,” saying among other things: “Depend upon it, you must answer for this with me at the bar of God; then you will see whether this is a little thing that you have done.”

These words, spoken with great solemnity, impressed the man deeply, and Carvosso left him to his own reflections while he went in pursuit of his fellow servant, a young man with whom he had labored faithfully on previous occasions, but without decisive effects. This time, however, he was successful in exacting a promise that he would at once begin a life of prayer.

Thus encouraged, our unresting leader next approached the two maid-servants; “to gain their

hearts for the Lord," he says, "I used all my influence. I strove with all my might to show them the impossibility of their being saved from hell or getting to heaven without prayer." One of them promised to begin seeking God at once. Carvosso carried the good news to his host and hostess, and that evening they turned their family worship into a prayer-meeting, and the presence of the Lord made it "a season not to be forgotten."

The result of these conversations during a brief visit was, as his host wrote a few days after: "All my servants are determined to serve God." Carvosso was happy, as he had good reason to be. Instead of spicing his conversation with mirthful nonsense, and thereby neutralizing his public efforts, he had seasoned it with the salt of evangelical truth, and gained four stars for the adornment of his eternal crown. O wise conversationalist!

One other example of his use of conversation when in the house of his friends must suffice. He was at a place called Breage, and in the home

of a Christian lady. An "impulse of duty" led him to improve his visit by conversing closely with her servant maid about her soul. After some preliminary remarks, he asked her:

"Are you willing to die in your present state?"

"No, I am not," replied the girl with commendable frankness.

"Suppose then," rejoined Carvosso with deep feeling, "God should now suddenly remove you to the world of spirits, what would become of you?"

This grim suggestion startled her conscience like a flash of light from eternity. Her soul trembled at the idea of appearing unpardoned before the divine tribunal; and with words scarcely audible because of the swellings of emotion, she said:

"I will hold myself to God, sir. I will begin to pray at once."

That night this convicted maiden was at class. So strong was our venerable leader's interest in her case, that he walked a mile the next morning on purpose to see her again. She was in earnest,

and while he was speaking she burst into tears and cried out:

“Oh, what a sinner I am! What a sinner I am!”

Then with a skill rarely excelled by any Christian teacher the good man “led her to the mercy seat of God in Christ Jesus, showing her the covenant blood, and what she wanted to make her happy.”

Under such guidance she soon looked confidently into the face of Him who taketh away the sin of the world, and her sorrow was turned into joy. She made a good profession and became a steadfast follower of her Lord.

These incidents were not exceptional but typical in our class-leader's life. Literally his conversation was always “as becometh the Gospel.” He was “holy in all manner of conversation.” He never defiled his lips by relating filthy stories or unseemly jests, after the manner of some persons who make lofty spiritual professions. Even when among his oldest friends, as when he met many at Mousehole with whom he had been

united in fellowship forty-seven years, he did not unbend so as to speak unprofitable words, but was enabled to write concerning his intercourse with them, "God was pleased again to bless my conversation to some of the feeble of the flock." His tongue was truly consecrated to God and his work. He used it conscientiously to glorify his Savior and benefit, not amuse, his fellow creatures. Hence it spoke the same language and dwelt on the same themes in private as in public, and never destroyed the force of what he said in class or prayer-meeting by its utterances in the social circle. In this respect most certainly he was a model Christian worker. We commend his example most emphatically to every class-leader, reminding him of this precious saying in the Epistle of James: "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man and able also to bridle the whole body."

One effect of Carvosso's consistency in conversation and in his general walk was, that it won the confidence of his contemporaries. This was strongly expressed one evening by his brother

in a prayer-meeting. Carvosso had exhorted the people with his usual impressiveness, when his brother arose and with streaming eyes, and voice trembling with emotion, said: "I have now known my brother William as a Christian nearly forty years, and have always been constrained to regard him as one of the best men living."

This was not a mere compliment. It was a conviction honestly spoken, and voiced the common opinion. Who can doubt that this opinion was a large factor among the elements of Carvosso's success? Granting this, every class-leader and worker will readily perceive that, if he would be largely useful, he must cultivate a character so pure that it will win for him a spotless reputation.

Besides being a man of pure lips, our successful worker was clothed with the power which cometh from much prayer.

"Prayer is the key of heaven; the Spirit helps faith to turn this key, and then it unlocks heaven."

Thus wrote quaint old Thomas Watson. Carvosso illustrated the truth of his remarks in that

he was a man of much prayer and of prayer which often opened the gate of mercy and drew down rich blessings both on his own soul and on the souls of his friends. There is no ground for doubting that his power in soul-winning and class-leading was largely gained by his communing much in secret with Him who rewardeth openly. A few examples of his power in prayer must suffice to illustrate this feature in his character.

He is at Camborne where, overtaking two serious persons in the street, he obtained a promise from them to meet him at class. They kept their word, and there, "*after a hard struggle in prayer for about two hours*, the Lord set them both at liberty."

This was a stubborn conflict; but at Trejuthan he found a penitent with whom he prayed, and "the Lord quickly answered for himself and filled her heart with triumphant joy."

At the same place after taking tea in a friend's house, he proposed prayer. A stranger to him entered just as they were about to kneel down.

Carvosso had scarcely opened his mouth in prayer before the awakening spirit touched the stranger, who "roared from the disquietude of his soul." His anguish of spirit was unusual, but borne up by the faith of Carvosso and his friends, he struggled up to a throne of grace, obtained mercy, and was soon heard "joyfully testifying that God had pardoned all his sins."

At another time while he was praying in a friend's house at Cury "the power of God came down in an extraordinary manner. One young man received the blessing of a clean heart and a young woman was awakened and wept bitterly on account of her sins."

On one occasion he prayed ardently that he might see God's "arm displayed in the salvation of another sinner." About the same time he was sent for to visit a person whom he had often warned in vain. She was sick, and alarmed for her soul's safety. After much faithful conversation he prayed with her, and while he was yet pleading she cried out, "Jesus is here, Jesus is here!"

Still more remarkable was his prayer for an impenitent friend which he continued for two months. Said he: "I entered into covenant with God that if he would bring her to the knowledge of the truth, I would eternally praise him for it." He pleaded hard, "travailed in birth for her," sometimes gaining a degree of assurance that his prayer would be answered and then having his impression clouded with doubt. At length, after spending nearly two hours one night pleading strongly in her behalf, he cried out:

"Lord, methinks I could stay all night praying for her, could I gain my suit."

In a moment, he assures us, "these words were applied, as if spoken, to my mind: 'thy prayer is heard, it shall be so.'"

Overjoyed by this impression and the thoughts it awakened, he continued for the space of two hours to shout, Glory, glory, glory! Whether the person for whom he prayed was converted or not, he does not inform us. We assume that she was, or he would not have inserted this account of his remarkable persistence.

He does, however, give us the result in the case of another person for whom he prayed in secret a long time. At length he met her unexpectedly one day, talked with her and, after much persuasion, obtained her promise to attend class-meeting. There she was deeply impressed by the hymn he gave out at the opening of the meeting; yet was not then led into spiritual liberty. But calling shortly after on her venerable friend, he so explained the nature of saving faith that she was soon able to write him, saying:

“I can love God above every thing, and trust I shall henceforth, through grace strengthening me, be ever numbered with the humble followers of the Lord Jesus.”

We might add other similar instances of this good man's power with God both in secret and in public prayer. These, however, are sufficient to show that he had power with men because he had power with God. His views of the spirit in which a Christian worker should pray are aptly put in the following paragraph:

“God has graciously bound himself to hear

prayer; and we have an unquestionable right to pray for the fulfillment of the covenant; nay, he himself has gone so far in encouraging us to ask the fulfillment of his promises, that he has condescended to say, 'Put me in remembrance;' as if he had said, 'When you pray be sure to bring the promises with you.' Hence I conclude if I have faith to give credit to God's Word, that promise which I lay hold of is mine, and all it contains, so far as my wants are concerned. On the other hand, if I entertain a doubt or stagger at the truth of God, I consider I have no claim, and my prayers will not find access. Such is the dreadful effect of unbelief that, speaking after the manner of men, it binds the hands of God. . . . The great object is to persevere in the prayer of faith."

Another source of Carvosso's power was derived from his loving familiarity with the Word of God. As we have remarked elsewhere, the Bible made him the man he was. We may add here that his constant citations from its hallowed pages gave dignity to his exhortations, elevation

to his prayers, and value to his instructions. He did not quote it as one merely seeking to prove a disputed point, but as one who felt that he was repeating the words of the Highest. He felt its power fusing his own emotions, stimulating his love, and strengthening his faith while he spoke. Indeed, its words almost transfigured him as they leaped from his earnest heart to his burning lips. The secret of this power of the Word over him was his great love for it. When quite aged he said:

“The Word of God never appeared so valuable in my eyes as at the present moment. Truly it is a lamp to my path and a light to my feet. All language fails to express the regard which I feel for it. ‘How sweet are thy words unto my taste. Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth.’ ‘Thy testimonies have I taken as a heritage forever, they are the rejoicing of my heart.’ Blessed be God, this is not only David’s experience, but through grace it is mine also.”

Yes, God’s Word, the sword of the Spirit, was the weapon with which through sixty years our

class-leader fought his Lord's battles. And no man need hope for success in soul-saving who has not learned to wield this sword of the Lord and of the soul-winner.

One other source of Carvosso's success was his personal power. He was magnetic. His presence impressed all with whom he came in contact. Like a magnet he drew them toward himself. This gift was not the effect of any one predominant trait, but of his manhood and character taken as a whole. It is impossible to analyze it satisfactorily. That he possessed it in a rare degree is, we think, made evident by the facts of his career as set forth in these pages. We will illustrate its effects with one example only.

He was one day visiting a mining village in company with several others. Just as the party was leaving, some one begged them to visit a poor sick blacksmith who was dying of consumption. Entering his little hut, they found him alone, stretched on a sort of crib. The poor man was surprised at the entrance of so many strangers, but Carvosso, though he had never seen

him before, very soon engrossed all his attention. Stepping to his side, he said:

“Well, my friend, we are come to inquire how you are.”

“I am very bad, sir,” feebly replied the blacksmith.

“How long have you been ill?”

“I have been lying here these ten weeks.”

“Indeed; but we have come particularly to inquire how your mind is.”

“Very bad, sir.”

“Indeed; what is the matter then?”

“Oh sir, I am such a great sinner!”

“A great sinner, are you?”

“Oh, yes, sir.”

“Well; what did Jesus Christ die for?”

“For sinners, sir; but I am—”

“Stop now; answer my questions. You say Jesus Christ died to save sinners; did he not die to save you?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Well, now, if he died to save you, should you not praise him?”

“Yes, sir; but—”

“Now stay, my friend; just answer my question. You admit that Christ died for you; then, I ask, should you not praise him?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Come then, my brother, lift up your voice and praise him. Glory be to God! glory be to God! Come, my dear brother, join with me to praise the Lord.”

This request astonished the poor burdened sinner. He hesitated; then, when persistently urged by Carvosso, repeated the exclamation, mechanically at first; but in a little while he seemed to forget himself and, looking to the Redeemer, uttered the words of praise with some feeling. As he continued to repeat them, his emotion deepened. Presently the power of the Highest descended upon his soul, and, with an energy surprising in so sick a man, he shouted:

“Glory, glory, glory! praise the Lord!”

The exertion exhausted him. He fell back on his pillow as if dying. But speedily recovering his strength, he rose up in his crib, and

renewed his glad notes of praise. Prayer was then offered, in which the sick man joined, "shouting aloud for joy of heart."

We suppose that few men could have so impressed and led that blacksmith into faith and praise as Carvosso did during this brief visit. The reader can readily perceive in this, as in other facts previously recorded, that it was not accomplished by any thing peculiar in what he said. His words were simple, abrupt, direct, pointed, and even commonplace. No, it was not the words, but the man. His power to command attention, to win confidence, to attract kindly feeling, to disarm prejudices, lay back of his speech. It was a precious gift. Not many possess it in so large a degree, but to a soul-winner it is a very valuable source of power, as it was to Carvosso.



Chapter XVIII.

CARVOSSO'S LAST DAYS.

PAINLESS death, a gentle closing of the eyes to sleep one's last long sleep, is no doubt much to be desired. Such a death is as beautiful as desirable, especially in those who have grown gray and feeble through long years of wearisome work in the Master's vineyard. Our Wesley was favored with such an euthanasia. But it was otherwise with Carvosso. After more than eighty-four years of toil, he was called to suffer like a martyr. After honoring his Christian profession with nearly sixty-four years of activity in the Church, he was required to exhibit the triumphs of faith through ten weary weeks of sickness, accom-

panied by almost constant excruciating pain. He had shown the world how a robust and generally healthy Christian could live. His last earthly mission was to teach men how a holy man could be triumphant in suffering. The dispensation was severe, but the victory was sublime; the succeeding rest and the reward, glorious.

His disease seized him with a rough hand from the first. Satan came with bodily anguish, and by their combined action he was for a time robbed of that delicious joy which had been characteristic of his Christian life. For years, except in his hours of temptation, he might have said with the saintly Alleine: "I fare deliciously every day, and lead a voluptuous life with spiritual dainties;" but now the heavenly manna ceased to fall, and the cup of salvation seemed to be removed beyond his reach. The tempter tortured him with the suggestion, "so long as you continue in the body your joy will not return." Nevertheless in his gloomiest moments he had not the "slightest doubt of his final salvation." Though

cruelly buffeted he was not in despair; though cast down he was not destroyed.

But this man of large trust and much prayer could not be held very long in bondage to a naked, comfortless faith. In spite of much physical anguish he resolutely lifted his eyes toward the throne of grace until, piercing the gloom of temptation, he once more saw the face of his pitiful Intercessor. Then the Holy Comforter brought home to his mind with power, the question of the Psalmist, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him who is health of my countenance and my God."

These words brought him partial victory. A little later another text gave him still greater comfort, and though the contents of the cup of his affliction continued to be exceedingly bitter, yet he was soon enabled to exclaim:

"I have no doubt, no fear, all is calm within. Perfect love casteth out fear. I shall soon be with Jesus."

Henceforth he was a sublime spectacle to

men and angels as he lay week after week, rejoicing in God while racked with pain, and displaying his ruling passion for soul-winning. As if forgetting himself, in his care for others, he said to a young class-leader who visited him one day: "My brother, use every means to prevent the members of your little flock from resting short of their privileges as believers in Christ." Then grasping the brother's hand, he added with emphasis: "My brother, be a spiritual guide."

To a young woman who came into his room he said very affectionately: "I entreat you to give your heart to God. See in me what religion can do for one on a bed of suffering and death!"

An aged woman who was resting short of conversion, he exhorted to seek a clear evidence of the forgiveness of sins.

Thus, as the wearisome weeks wore on, this "veteran Christian warrior lay in the bottom of the burning fiery furnace clapping his hands, and triumphing and glorying in his great deliverer." His soul grew more and more humbled and purified as the fire waxed hotter and hotter. Once

only did he show the least tendency to impatience, and that was when, under a paroxysm of fierce pain, he observed :

“I see no end;” but instantly recollecting himself, he added: “This is the language of sense, not of faith.”

What sublime patience!

Often in his moments of deepest anguish he exclaimed: “Precious Jesus, help thy servant! Give me a soul inured to pain.”

Never through all those long weeks of agony did he drop an expression of distrust or complaint. His resignation and submission to the divine will grew with his sufferings. His graces seemed to flourish in the fire. He frequently remarked:

“What a mercy I feel no condemnation; and, as to my affliction, I am thankful I brought it not upon myself. It is the lot which God has chosen for me.”

What beautiful submission!

To one beloved friend who came to see him he talked of past and present mercies until “they

seemed to mount high in the chariot of Amina-dab, and he was lost in wonder, love, and praise." When two other dear friends stood beside his bed he wept freely, pressed their hands to his lips, and exclaimed joyfully:

"My God, I am thine! What a comfort divine!
What a blessing to know that my Jesus is mine!"

Hallelujah! I am on my journey home."

To his son he said one night: "I am an unprofitable servant; but giving all the glory to God, I am not only a witness that Jesus hath power upon earth to forgive sins; but also that he can cleanse from all unrighteousness. . . . If any thing is said of me after I am gone let great care be taken to ascribe nothing to me—nothing to nature."

What perfect humility!

Toward the last, when his agony was intense, and while the tears ran down his pale, sunken face, he repeated with indescribable emphasis the following lines:

"Though waves and storms go o'er my head,
Though strength and health and friends be gone,

Though joys be withered all and dead,
And every comfort be withdrawn,
On this my steadfast soul relies,—
Father, thy mercy never dies.

Fixed on this ground will I remain,
Though my heart fail and flesh decay;
This anchor shall my soul sustain,
When earth's foundations melt away;
Mercy's full power I then shall prove,
Loved with an everlasting love."

When still nearer the final struggle his joy grew more and more exultant. "At times," says his son, "for hours together he was sustained in the highest Christian triumph; when no language of sacred poetry or of the Scriptures appeared too strong to afford expression to the vivid feelings of his full heart." Many times he was so borne up on the wings of love that he exclaimed: "It seems as if I could not hold my tongue." His heart seemed "to dance with rapture at the mention of the name of Jesus!"

What an exhibition of the blessedness of perfect love!

His last two weeks brought him some relaxa-

tion of suffering, but greater weakness of body. His mind was much occupied with thoughts of his inheritance above. But even then, when his feet were on the shore of the dark river and he could almost descry the gates of the Celestial city, his heart could not forget the souls for whom he had labored. In death, as in life, they were dear to him, and at different times he said with much emotion: "Now we live if ye stand fast in the Lord." What more striking proof could be given of the genuineness of his passion for soul-winning than this thoughtfulness for their welfare at a time when the film of death was creeping over his eyes?

The long desired hour of his departure arrived at last. In full possession of his senses this holy man, about to enter the presence of the Highest, remembered "his character as a sinner" and remarked sweetly:

"I have this morning been looking about for my sins, but I can not find any of them. They are all gone."

Just before the end he requested his children

to pray, and responded to their petitions with holy animation. As they arose from their knees he exclaimed, "God bless you all!"

It was his parting benediction. An indescribable expression of joy and triumph, then irradiated his countenance. He was evidently looking into heaven. To the surprise of all he then gave out the doxology, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," with a tone and vigor equal to his best days. To their still greater astonishment, he attempted to raise the tune. But before he had completed the strain his voice failed. Literally it was lost in death, for he "suddenly and sweetly slept in Jesus." Just as his breath was departing some one remarked that dying Christians had sometimes signified their happiness after losing the power of speech, by raising their hand. Instantly the venerable patriarch lifted his left arm, and then let it fall back gently upon the bed. When it ceased to move, the soul of Carvosso was "absent from the body and present with the Lord." His eighty-five years of life on earth was ended, and his life in eternal glory begun.

Why was such a good man made the subject of such extreme and bitter suffering while passing down to the gate of death? Many who knew Carvosso asked this question. Perhaps the reader asks it too. It is an inquiry which very naturally forces itself upon the mind.

To write frankly we must reply we do not know. It is not given to mortal man to solve the mysteries of the Divine administration. We can, however, suggest first, that Carvosso suffered that he might show the world how divine grace can enable a good man to be happy in the fiercest furnace of physical agony. Who knows how many have been helped to endure like afflictions by thinking of his triumph in the fires? Secondly, So far as the sufferer himself was concerned doubtless his terrible affliction wrought out for him "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Does he complain, now that he is in possession of the heavenly compensation, that he was unjustly or unkindly treated by being made to pass through the thrice heated furnace? Nay, doubtless he rejoices that the honor of so

displaying the power of his Master's love was awarded to him. We may rest assured that no charges of injustice are made against our just and loving Lord in the world that lieth beyond the river. Let us not, therefore, give place to doubtful questionings on earth. Even where we are perplexed by seeming mysteries we can find rest in the Savior's words: "Even so, Father, for thus it seemeth good in thy sight."

A large concourse witnessed the interment of his body. His words survived him in their influence over multitudes. Even to-day his memory is precious. The sweet story of his useful life still teaches class-leaders and soul-winners what may be accomplished with limited intellectual endowments undeveloped by human teachers, but wholly consecrated to God, unfolded by the private study of the Divine Word, and illuminated by the light of the Holy Spirit. He was what he was because, like Enoch of old, "he walked with God." But for that fact the world would not have gained much from his life. It would be folly in us to affirm that every illiterate

Christian may be in every respect as useful as was Carvosso, because every such person is not endowed with his remarkable vitality, his great will-force, his affectionate geniality, his healthy common sense, and his rare power of personal attraction. But we do say that, there is no man on earth, be he weak or strong, illiterate or learned, who can attain his utmost power of usefulness except by such entire self-consecration, such prayerfulness, such communion with God, and such a passionate love for the souls of men, as gave character to this class-leader of sixty years.



Chapter XIX.

THOUGHTS ON CLASS-MEETINGS AND CLASS-LEADERS.

WHAT there is a tendency, more or less decided, throughout Methodism to suffer the “*class-meeting*” to sink into neglect it were folly to deny. The fact that its friends in America, in England, and even in Australia, find it necessary to hold special conventions and grave discussions in its behalf, and to set forth its claims in multitudinous appeals through the press, is proof enough that they see and feel and are alarmed at this tendency. When physicians hold grave consultations there is good reason for fearing that the patient is, or is supposed to be, in a critical condition.

If it be true that the class-meeting is in danger

of falling into desuetude, it is a matter to be deeply regretted. For, though we agree with Wesley, their institutor, that class-meetings are "not essential nor of divine institution, but merely prudential helps," yet we also hold with him that "it can scarcely be conceived what advantages have been reaped" by them. No other institution of man's devising is better adapted to some of the needs of the spiritual life than this. As a means of instructing the ignorant, guiding the inexperienced, comforting the despondent, restoring the fallen, and of promoting the fellowship of believers, it is a valuable auxiliary of the Church. Nevertheless, in spite of its intrinsic worth, the ugly fact of its growing inattractiveness to many stares us in the face.

There must be a cause for this fact. What is it? Is it in the institution itself? If so, in which of its features? Is it in the people? If so, must we find it in a general decline of spirituality, or in some change in their outward condition which makes the class less needful to their spiritual comfort and profit than in other days?

We write not dogmatically but tentatively as one who desires to ascertain the nature of the worm which is feasting on the root of this fruitful Wesleyan plant. Hence we venture the inquiry, May there not be several causes, some in the people, others in the institution itself, conspiring to diminish the interest of the Church in the class-meeting?

1. We reject the theory that our people are spiritually degenerated. Our personal knowledge of Methodism reaches back a half-century, our opportunities for observation have been neither few nor unfavorable, and we can not doubt that the spirituality of the Church of to-day is, on the average, as deep and pure as in the palmiest days of the class-meeting. Our Church life may be less demonstrative than in other days, but it never bore more abundant, spiritual, ethical, and benevolent fruitage than it does to-day. If it was once a lively, babbling brook, it is now a calm, majestic, rolling river.

2. But, we would inquire, have not the altered opinions of the religious world touching Christian

experience tended to diminish the interest of our people in the class? The specific theme of the class-meeting is, not the doctrinal, but the experimental, side of Christian life. Its characteristic features are mutual confessions of faith, love, hope, and joy, with suitable instructions for the maturing of these precious graces. Let it be remembered that when it originated few, even in religious circles, believed it possible for one to possess a divine witness of forgiven sin. Whoever professed that he had positive knowledge of his acceptance with God was generally regarded and treated as a fanatic. This ostracism was hard to endure. The feeble band of original Methodists who suffered it greatly needed that encouragement which comes from the sympathy of kindred minds, for even the bravest are apt to quail when left companionless in presence of an execrating multitude. Hence it is easy to perceive why the class-meeting was a precious place of resort to many of our people of the olden time. Despised, often persecuted, for their faith in their own households, they went to the class

as to a house of refuge, a spot of cheer, where they found needed strength in fellowship, instruction in the sacred mysteries of the inner life, and rapturous joy in their mutual confessions of trustful love. The flavor which persecution gives to self-assertion made class exercises eminently enjoyable.

To-day all this is changed. Methodism by its victories has won the religious world generally to its views of Christian experience. It is no longer counted fanaticism to profess knowledge of forgiven sin. Consequently, as much of the need of sympathy as had its origin in scorn and persecution has ceased to be felt. What is less needed is less valued; and may not this be one reason why the class-meeting is less attractive to many than in the past?

3. May not our manner of conducting *prayer-meetings* have contributed to the same result? These, instead of being spent in praise, prayer, and exhortation, are in many places largely made into opportunities for the relation of experience; that is, for Christian fellowship. The specific

work of the class being done in them, sufficiently at least to meet partially the demands of the spiritual life for free expression in words, and for fellowship, they satisfy the need of many on these points. Hence again, the need of the class being less felt, it is more and more neglected.

4. Is not the number of persons whose idiosyncrasies render them averse to such free expression of religious feeling before others as the class implies increasing among us? We think it is; and, while not applauding it, are disposed to respect the qualities from which such reticence springs. To many warm-hearted, outspoken Methodists this reserve is unintelligible; and is, uncharitably we think, attributed to the lack of true Christian character. But personal acquaintance with many such compels us to an opposite opinion, and to attribute their reticence to extreme, possibly morbid, conscientiousness, and to a refined, timid sensitiveness which regards the inner life as too sacred a theme for conversation, except with a pastor or a dear and tried friend. Most certainly many such persons are beautiful

in their lives, and will endure every test of Christian character—speaking of their religious emotions only excepted—at least as well as the majority of those who abound in that Christian virtue. We have met with some most pure-minded and influential persons in other Churches who were converted at our altars when the rule, “meet the brethren (in class) or leave them,” was rigidly enforced, and who were refused membership among us because they *could* not overcome their aversion to speech concerning themselves in the weekly class. Whether Methodism gained or lost, on the whole, by the exclusion of such, we will not here pretend to decide. But we do know that we have often regretted to see them shining as ornaments in other denominations instead of in our own.

There never was a period when minds of this type were not connected with Methodism. Hence, while a large proportion of our people have loved the class, a very respectable minority have always attended it irregularly and perfunctorily. Even at the time of its institution in 1742, three years

subsequent to the organization of Wesley's societies, "Some of the old members," says Tyerman, "were at first extremely averse to this new arrangement, regarding it not as a privilege, but rather a restraint." In 1764 Wesley found it necessary to insist on class attendance, and to say to his Bristol societies, "Whoever misses his class thrice together thereby excludes himself." In 1776 Wesley said of the rule excluding for non-attendance, "We must threaten no longer but perform. . . . I will give tickets to none . . . who have not met in class once a week." In 1780 the Conference resolved that "class-meetings must be made more lively and profitable." And, like our British brethren, we in America have always been obliged to resort more or less to disciplinary pressure to induce the attendance of these reticent ones at class.

That the number of this sensitive type of mind increases in proportion to the general advance of our people in intellectual and literary culture no close, thoughtful observer will, we think, dispute. Whatever may be the cause,

it is an obvious fact that people of refined tastes and reflective habits are generally less disposed to speak *openly* and freely of their inner life than those who live in a narrower thought-world, but who luxuriate in emotional experiences. The former may be as devoted to Christ, perhaps as happy on the whole, as the latter; but, being disinclined to class-meeting exercises, as usually conducted, their increase in the Church must be counted as one of the factors bearing on the solution of the class-meeting problem. Whether it be possible or not entirely to overcome their disinclination by modifications of the methods of conducting the class, we will not presume to decide; but we will dare to hope that out of the present widely extended discussion of the question some means may be found which will allure this highly respectable portion of our membership to support this desirable means of grace, if not for their own sake, at least for the good it does to others.

5. The modification of our itinerancy effected by time and circumstances has no doubt had its influence on the class. When our ministers were

forever on the wing their pastoral work was necessarily either superficially done or entirely neglected. Then the class-leader's sub-pastoral functions were obviously indispensable. But now that the majority of our ministers are stationed and remain with their charges from one to three years, they may be pastors as well as preachers and teachers. Hence the pastoral duties of the leader not being so absolutely needed are not so highly valued as formerly. And this fact is pleaded by some as an objection to the continuation of the leader's office.

A little reflection will convince any candid thinker that the objection is superficial. 1. Our ministers, though better able to perform pastoral work than in former times, are still itinerants. Their relation to their flock is periodically severed. Is it not desirable that persons holding at least a sub-pastoral connection should be permanently and constantly present in the Church? Would not such a relation properly sustained go far toward softening the periodical separation of pastor and people which is one of the harshest

features of our itinerant system? Moreover, what is better adapted to assist the incoming pastor in making a speedy and intelligent acquaintance with the members of his new flock than the presence of a small body of trustworthy brethren familiarly acquainted with their spiritual condition?

2. If our ministry were permanent instead of itinerant, such a sub-pastorate as our class system furnishes would still be desirable. May we not add *indispensable to its highest efficiency*? In large Churches it is literally impossible for a minister to do all the pastoral work required by the spiritual needs of his people. The demands of his pulpit, of his public position, of his social services, of his Sunday-school work, of sick chambers, and of the numerous incidental duties of his office consume so much of his time and strength that little of either remains for general pastoral work. The same is also true, in a measure, in country churches whose membership is scattered in many directions and over different neighborhoods. In nearly every case, the minister needs suitable assistance in this interesting

department of his duties. And who can devise a wiser, better, or more effective plan than is contained in our class institution?

It is a well-known fact that many earnest minds in denominations having a settled ministry have often confessed the need of something like our class system among themselves. They may not, do not very generally, favor our *class-meetings* as usually conducted, but in our division of Churches into classes and in our body of leaders viewed as sub-pastors, they discern a principle which many of them would like to see introduced into their own ecclesiastical organizations. Should not their judgment incline us to respect and develop the institution with ever increasing fidelity and vigor?

But notwithstanding these objections, we have no apprehension that the *class* will ever disappear from Methodism. It is the unit of every Methodist Church organization; the most simple and effectual instrument of spiritual propagandism ever invented; it meets as no other service can (not excepting the prayer-meeting or the com-

munion) the demand of the Christian life for fellowship, for instruction on experimental points, and for spiritual sympathy. Nevertheless, we incline to the opinion that in some respects the *class-meeting* might be improved by such modifications as would make it attractive to the reticent minds mentioned above, and more efficient both in its relations to the pastorate and to the spirituality of the people.

The weakest point in our class system is the leadership. Not that we have not many most excellent class-leaders in the Church, but that, among the forty or fifty thousand persons who hold the office, there are so many who are inefficient and far below the standard of an ideal class-leader. This is not to be wondered at. The qualities—mental, moral, practical, and spiritual;—which are necessary to make a successful leader, are far above the average endowment of Church members. It is not easy to find men who possess them all in due and symmetrical proportion. Yet without such, the class can not prosper. Dull, spiritless, hum-drum leaders would

kill class-meetings made up of angelic members. As in the Sunday-school the teacher makes or mars the class, so it is in the *class-meeting*. Its leader makes it. To expect intelligent persons to give an evening every week to a leader whose class exercises consist in a formal prayer, in the stereotyped question, "How do you enjoy your mind, my brother?" in common-place rejoinders to the equally commonplace responses he receives, is worse than folly. It is a waste of time to which sensible people will not long consent. A leader who adds nothing to his members' ideas of religious duty, throws no light on their experience, imparts no fresh impulse to their emotions, lifts them no nearer heaven, is an unendurable infliction, and not a blessing to his class. The higher the culture of his members the more repugnant is his dullness. If the Church would save the class-meeting from death by neglect, her ministers must every-where give due heed to the oft-repeated admonition, "Change improper leaders."

As we have said, it is not an easy task to find

men every way competent to become successful leaders. Men like William Carvosso are not common products either of nature or grace. But there are many good men who, though not qualified to shine as leaders of *class-meetings*, could do excellent personal service as effective sub-pastors. Such men might be utilized if the Church would return to the old practice of having small classes of from ten to fifteen members. Over such a number a faithful weekly visitation when needed could be maintained. But would you abandon the *class-meeting*? By no means. We would have each Church try to develop as many leaders as possible, with ability to conduct a *class-meeting* effectively, and then let the classes, two or more, assemble together as is directed by our Discipline. By this means the class whose leader excelled as a sub-pastor, but lacked the power to lead a meeting efficiently would reap the benefit not only of the personal pastoral labor of its own leader, but also share the instruction to be derived from his more gifted brother.

The qualities needed to give interest and

secure blessed results in the class-meeting have been made apparent in our study of Carvosso. The reader will readily recall them. We will sum them up.

1. It is *not necessary* that a man be intellectually great or highly educated. Carvosso was not more than an average man mentally; he had no school education, and yet Methodism never had a more effective leader. Of course, the more intellect and education a Christian layman possesses the better is the foundation for extensive usefulness in soul-work. But great things may be accomplished with no higher endowments, no better education, than Carvosso enjoyed.

2. Deep, sound, not morbid or fanatical, piety is indispensable in a class-leader. He must be a "*man* in Christ;" must live very near to God; be profoundly versed in the seeming mysteries of Christian experience. How else can he *lead* men up into the heights of holy living? An effective leader must be able to say, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord."

3. He must be a man of common sense. For lack of this many good men fall into extravagant opinions, make wild speeches, and bring discredit on the cause of Christ.

4. He must possess an unspotted reputation. No man with a blot upon his name can command the confidence of others. Such a man is a blight, not a blessing, to both Church and class. He should be kept in the background.

5. He must possess a passionate love for souls, Like Carvosso, he must be baptized with the Spirit of the second great commandment, or his labors will be formal and perfunctory.

6. He must be gifted with power to express his ideas clearly. A bungling talker may mortify, but he can not help either intelligent or ignorant minds.

7. He must be a diligent student of the Word of God. The Word is the sword of the Spirit. He who would win souls must be familiar with its divine words which can make him "mighty through God," both to rebuke evil and to build up believers in their most holy faith.

These are the main qualities of a successful class-leader. To them we add *tact*, that he may learn to adapt himself to men and circumstances. He will need this practical quality especially in conducting the *class-meeting* which, to succeed in the future, must be made a very different affair from what it has been in the past. It must be less formal; less exacting in demanding perfunctory speeches from its members; more instructive, and be characterized by freedom and variety. It must be, in brief, a *meeting for free conversation on experimental godliness—a little school of spiritual culture*—and a battle-ground for the attainment of larger experiences and for the conversion of souls. The *class-meeting of the future* must possess the following general characteristics:

1. Its spirit must be eminently devotional. The leader must go to it from his closet, and by the life of his opening prayer lead his members into communion with God.

2. Its exercise must not be mere recital of experience, but *conversational*, the topic being some point of Christian experience previously

agreed upon or suggested by some religious peculiarity of the hour.

3. Sometimes the conversation may be pivoted upon some passages of Scripture named at a previous meeting, or upon some phase of experience as illustrated in the life and Psalms of David, or in Daniel or Paul or John or some other Bible or historical character.

4. At other times special topics may be talked of; such as the gift of power on the day of Pentecost; the promised manifestation of Jesus in the hearts of his disciples; temptation; the uses of severe trials; the witness of the Spirit to adoption; growth in grace; union with Christ; perfect love, etc. Whatever the theme, it must never be discussed controversially, but always on its experimental side; the aim being to encourage each other in gaining some present increase of spiritual power. Each member of the class should be encouraged, not *required*, to contribute something from his knowledge, observation, or experience. By skillful management the most reticent will be induced to make inquiries, to

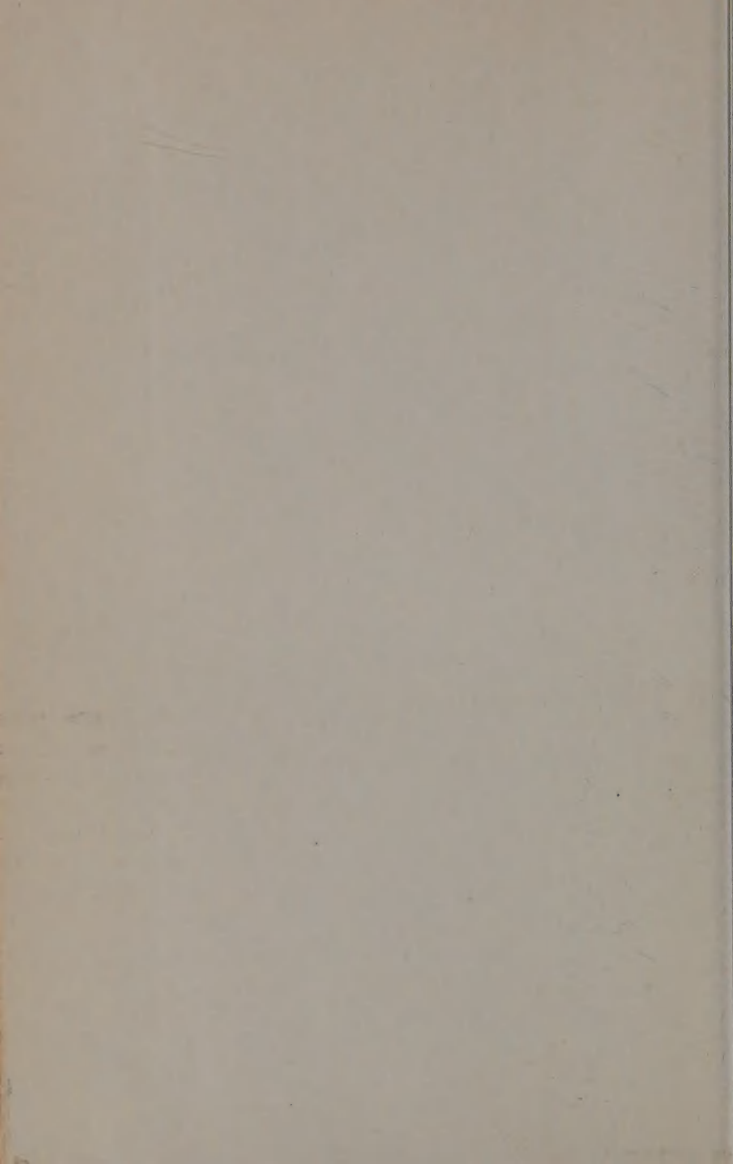
offer remarks, to find profit. If the fire of religious emotion be kindled the tongues of the most timid ones will be moved to speak.

In addition to these exercises for the benefit of believers, the class-meeting must contribute to the aggressive spirit of the Church of which it forms a part. The leader should be a soul-winner always seeking, as Carvosso did, to bring serious persons to his class-room. He should stimulate his members to enter upon the same blessed work, and not rest until his class is a band of warriors intent on constant warfare against the kingdom of evil. Next to making the meeting a Pisgah for happy believers, he should strive to make it a battle-ground for the conversion of penitent souls. In a large community no leader should be satisfied without the presence of one or more seekers at every meeting of his class. In smaller communities where there are not so many to be reached, there should still be a constant endeavor on the part of all to bring serious persons to the meeting. By this means the growth of the Church would be every-where

progressive, constant, and less spasmodic than at present; and the class-meeting would be the most popular and beloved resort of the Church. The idea of its desuetude would be scouted as the dream of a backslider.

Other suggestions might be added, but we forbear. Enough has been written to excite the live leader to attempt such modes of conducting his meeting as will cause it to become a center of attraction, a place of spiritual culture and profit. We will only add for the encouragement of such a leader that next to the ministerial, there is no vocation in the modern Church which offers such opportunities of great usefulness as that of a Methodist class-leader. The story of Carvosso is proof of this assertion. True, every leader can not be precisely what he was, neither should he try to be. An imitator is generally more or less of a sham. But every leader should in his own sphere emulate Carvosso's whole-souled devotion to Christ and his work; and by doing this he may make himself eminently useful and supremely happy.

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